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Cover Photo of Kristy Kelley by Bill DeMichele Tattoos by unknown artists

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THE WIND BENEATH MY CHEEKS

I'm writing this while the rain lashes down outside in the darkness. It is, in fact, one of those dark and stormy nights they talk about.

Right now I'm in between several tornado warnings, one's just ending and another is cranking up. This storm is the ragged tail end of the monster that wiped out Joplin, Missouri, earlier in the week. What we're getting now, several hundred miles and several days away from Joplin, are a few older barns down and an unlucky roof lifted off here and there. Not much at all compared with the big show. So far. But it's early yet, and this could really crank up.

Looking at the ruination of Joplin, you can't help but wonder how it would feel if it were your house and/or business that was blown away like so many old Dixie cups. The death toll, that's another aspect. I'm talking property damage—like you and your family survive healthy and well with nothing left, not even a car.

Consider the old rag that used to get waved around to prevent people from getting tattooed: It'll be there for the rest of your life. Mothers especially loved to say it. It was the tattoo equivalent of "You'll shoot your eye out." You don't hear it today as often as you used to. The thing was always tossed out as a curse with the idea behind it, I guess, that nobody could ever find an image they'd want to see on their arm forever. Especially not if you happened to be 18 or so.

I've always personally felt that this argument, more clearly than most, had two sides, and that those sides can be demonstrated with a simple, basic football cheer: Boo, your tattoo will be there forever. Hooray, my tattoo will be there forever. It's as simple as that.

The thing was—or is—that the naysayers always hated tattoos just because they were tattoos. They had no more reason than that. My mother was one of them. She's come to terms with it now, as I guess many mothers have, which is why you don't hear the curse so often anymore.

Mom doesn't exactly love them, but she doesn't hate them, either. Call it a function of public exposure. Mom's a big basketball fan, so she sees plenty of ink on players.

The wind is amping up outside my house. The weather channels have warned us about possible golf-ball sized hail with this storm, which I really don't want falling on any of my cars. Steady thunder has sent my cats into hiding. It's not the worst storm we've had this year but it looks like it's going to run a solid second.




Years ago I watched Randy Herring, who tattoos in Gastonia, North Carolina, work two days straight on this biker guy. Randy's not the fastest guy in the world but he covered a lot of ground in two days. His client, as it turned out, was about to go to prison for something like 20 years. He wanted all the color he could get before he went.

This prison guy was about to lose all he had. What he wanted to carry with him was tattooing.

And I like to think that if I were in the position of losing everything I had, I'd be able to take at least some comfort in my tattoos. At least, I think I'd take some comfort in them still being there.

But there's something to consider about that, too. One of the smartest guys I ever met said that when rich people tell themselves they know what it'd be like to be poor, it's a big fat lie. They have no idea what poor is like and can't imagine it.

I believe that. I also, by extension, believe I have no idea at all what it would be like to lose everything overnight. So maybe my thinking about tattoos as a source of comfort is the bunk. I can only hope I'll never know. 

—Chris Pfouts
Editor

"Like any artist, I need reliable colors that go in with ease, no complications and stay vibrant and beautiful. That's what you get with Bloodline!" -Freddie Negrete, Shamrock Tattoo, West Hollywood

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letters to the editor

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—Kasimir Malevich

ARIZONA SUNRISE

Hello my name is Shawn. I am an artist in Tempe, Arizona. I am mainly writing a letter to the editor to hopefully shed some light on the absolute injustice going on in this state when it comes to tattooing. Backyard tattooing is an epidemic here making it virtually impossible to make a good living tattooing. And this is a direct effect of the lack of body art laws here, which allows every shmoe with a tattoo machine to tattoo at home and call themselves a professional tattoo artist, which has lead to a high percentage of STDs and other nasty diseases floating around this city. But mainly I am curious if there will ever be federal laws instated and enforced for body modification instead of the state-by-state laws. P.S. I very much enjoy your magazine!

--Shawn Smith
Via e-mail

You already have your laws. It's a felony in Arizona to either tattoo or pierce with unsterile equipment, and it's also a felony to tattoo or pierce out of a house, or any kind of temporary structure—like a tent, trailer, bus or zeppelin.

That takes care of the important basics—To get square with the law you gotta work clean, and you have to do

that clean work in a business setting. Those two laws would seem to be all you're asking for. You might not be getting your laws enforced, but that's a different story, and a fairly common one around America today: plenty of laws, slack enforcement. Which is a good place to be careful what you wish for.

A tough, atavistic Irishman named Brendan Behan once wrote that he'd never seen a situation so bad that the presence of a policeman couldn't make worse. Bear that in mind.

As far as federal laws, that'd be a disaster and a half. You might think that's what you want but it's not. It's really not.

It's certainly true that with the economy in the tank like it is, people are cutting corners all over the place. And economy or not, there has always been a facet of the tattoo market that was more concerned with price than quality. But in the end, quality will always sell.

--Chris Pfouts
Editor

NORTH OF THE BORDER

My name is Joel Montfort, but most people know me as Mofo. Been that way forever now. I'm a tattoo artist from Oshawa, Ontario, Canada. I've been tattooing now for around four

years. I do a lot of portrait work, mostly in black and grey, but lately been stepping into the color realm. You guys do a great magazine.

--Joel "Mofo" Montfort
Oshawa, ON, Canada

VIVA

My name is Bryan Seibert and I tattoo at Ink Kin6's U.T. Tattoos in Las Vegas, NV. I enjoy your publication and I purchase it any time I can. I think it's great you give artists a chance to show their work to the world.

--Bryan Seibert
Kin6's U.T. Tattoos
Las Vegas, NV

FIRST TIME'S A CHARM

I picked up your magazine for the first time and I got to say I love it. I love the variety of artists you cover. Just in the first magazine I found a lot of unique and interesting ideas, I'm in Ait for the U.S. military 795th MpBn Charlie Company, and all my friends beg me to let them see your magazine. Keep up the good work

--PV2 Kristofor Hack
Overseas

UFO CONTACT

Hi, I'm Michele Mazzetto and I have a tattoo and body piercing studio in Padova, Italy: U.F.O. Tattoo & Piercing. I am sending pictures of my works because I find your magazine really cool and interesting. It would be great if I could see my works in it.

--Michele Mazzetto
U.F.O. Tattoo & Piercing
Padova, Italy

REGARDS FROM JOLLY OLDE

Just sending some photos of our work from across the pond. Hope all is well with you over there. Have a great year.

--Oliver Jerrold & Tem Sosa
Hope & Glory
Swaffham, Norfolk
England

WELL DONE

I just started at the CIA—that's the Culinary Institute of America, not the spy outfit.

Anyway, a few people around school have food-oriented tattoos. I got a piece of celery with a clock showing both hands on twelve on my right arm last summer. Celery stalks at midnight, get it? Like some kind of a cornball crime drama. It's an old gag.

Anyway, I was wondering if you ever did a story on food tattoos. There's a lot of them out here in the free world, steaks and chops, fruits and vegetables, cupcakes, candy, stacks of pancakes, even fish—although fish are usually portrayed as cartoonish bones or liv. Now, everybody's got to eat and food makes a great subject for a good, creative artist.

--Catherine Wise
Via e-mail

PHOTO GENESIS

Great magazine. I have a question on submissions of photos: Do you take photo submissions of models with ink from outside sources? I'd love to add some images to your mag. If so what would I need to send you? Thanks.

--Mike Scalisi
Relaxx Images
Via e-mail

We accept photos from anyone, anywhere, anytime the mail unit comes through our sector. And it's fair to say that anything you think might interest us, might interest us. If nothing else, we have open minds around here. Fire away.

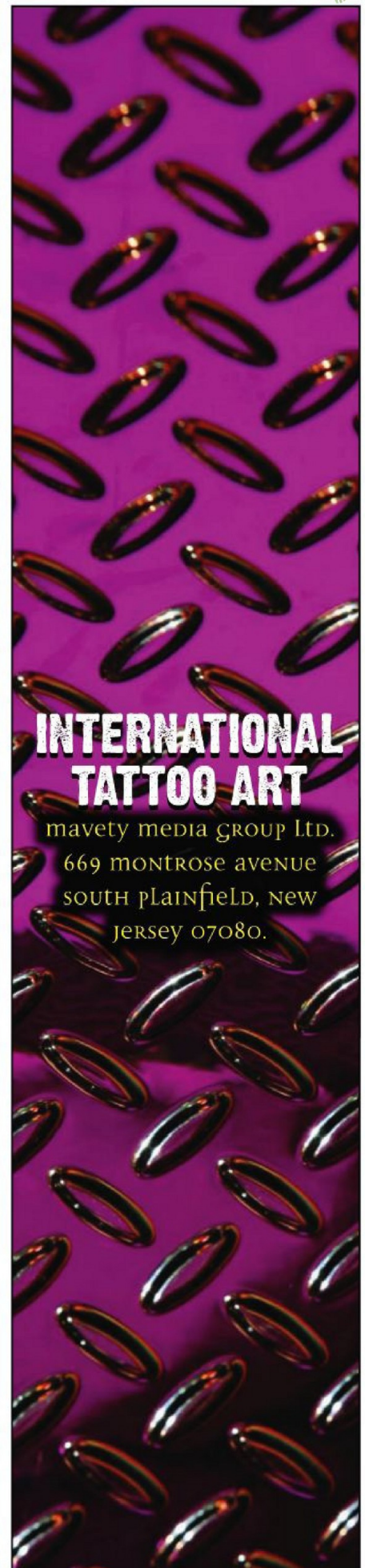
WHERE TO SEND PICTURES

I read the information on submission of artist and I need the address where I can send the photos with my name on back. Thank you.

--Govanda Davis
Via e-mail

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SURVIVING, LIVING AND BEYOND

Tattoo Artist

Mylke
Chambers

By Amanda Stephan



These days the various media prattle on endlessly about surviving. There are TV shows about it. Survival has become synonymous with triumph.

Myke Chambers doesn't want to be classified as a survivor. "My whole life I prided myself on being a survivor," he said. "I survived a messed-up childhood, living on the streets, four years in prison, and drug addiction. Well, I realize today that surviving isn't living. Today I'm learning to live."

For Chambers, living entails embracing the lessons of his past and conveying those lessons to others. He visits prisons to share his story with men who are preparing for release. He also goes to juvenile rehabilitation centers to mentor youths who appear to be retracing steps that Chambers once made. Chambers relates his experience living as a member of the country's homeless population when he was 15 years old. "I hopped freight trains around the country, ate out of the trash, and slept anywhere I could with nothing but a backpack and my dog. I've lived a pretty rough life from a young age," he recalled. "Then I found drugs and became a drug addict and alcoholic by age seventeen. From age seventeen to thirty, I was pretty much in a drug-induced nightmare, until I finally checked myself into a rehabilitation center wanting to die."

Rehabilitation offered Chambers something that he hadn't frequently experienced on the outside. What he found were people just like him, people who were struggling. There was a difference between these people and those that he encountered up until that point. "They didn't want anything from me but to help me," he said. "That was September 8, 2005. I haven't done drugs or drank since." Now, for the last five years Chambers has offered others what proved to be life changing to him.

Compassion and hope aren't the only things that Chambers offers the world. Outside of sharing his emotional journey, Chambers shares his artistic vision. He's a talented artist who uses tattooing to express himself. Tattooing became part of his life over 16 years ago, when he was immersed in enough turmoil to prevent him from appreciating what tattooing had to offer. Some of his earliest memories are of his little brother and friends tattooing one another when Chambers was just 12. Over the years, all of the guys who Chambers looked up to had tattoos, including the punk heroes whom he celebrated while he ran the streets. While living in a punk house in New Orleans' Ninth Ward, Chambers apprenticed for six months under the tutelage of a friend and housemate, Weasel.

The apprenticeship was brief. Weasel passed away, and Chambers headed off to Hollywood, confident that he knew it all. There, he paid his dues at a street shop for longer than he cares to admit. "I had been tattooing in a haze for ten years. I stopped growing or even caring. It's sad, but I see it happen all the time," he said. "After sobering up, I tried to tattoo and though I knew what to do, it was like I just couldn't, so I had to relearn. Today I'm still growing and learning. I hope I continue to learn until the day I die. As soon as I think I know it all, I'm done for."

Nine months into his sobriety, Chambers opened his own custom studio, Eternally Bound, in Austin, Texas. He rebuilt himself as a tattoo artist, and stepped into a new level of commitment and responsibility as a business owner. Chambers found success in this new role, and discovered his appetite for traditional American artwork. "I'm really having fun with traditional tattoo imagery," he



"I'm really big on tradition, on respecting where this art came from."



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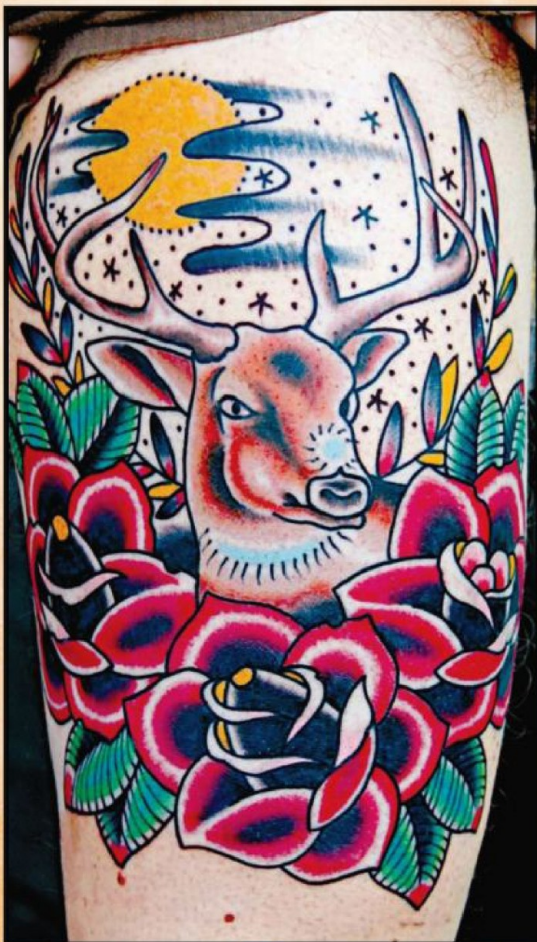
said. "I love bright colors and bold lines. I'm really big on tradition, on respecting where this art came from, and on tattoos that will really handle the test of time. Traditional is tried and true. I do, however, like to put my own special spin on things."

As Chambers has worked to formulate his own version of traditional inkwork, Russ Abbott has been a significant stimulus. Chambers admires Abbott not just because they share an interest in the same style of tattooing, but because Abbott has been successful in cultivating his own style. "I don't want my stuff to look like anyone else's," he said. "There are so many carbon copies out there today. It seems like there's not a lot of originality going on. I mean there are the top guys that are doing their thing and then everyone else just follows suit. The thing they don't realize is those top tattooers out there got there, not by copying, but by being original. Russ is one of those guys."

In an effort to truly familiarize himself with all of the innovators out there, Chambers decided to sell his studio and do some traveling. He sold his studio to Keith Underwood and hit the road for a year. This time, he is on the road with a clear head and a solid purpose. His destinations are more formal than they were in the past, and are primarily guest spots and conventions. Life is an adventure for Myke Chambers, an adventure sure to teach him something in his quest to learn how to live. "I guess I left Austin for a change," he said. "Things were getting a little too routine there and I needed to shake it up a bit."

After his walk-about, you'll be able to find Myke Chambers at Art Machine Productions in Philadelphia, Penn. You can keep track of Chambers on the Web at www.mykechambers.com. 

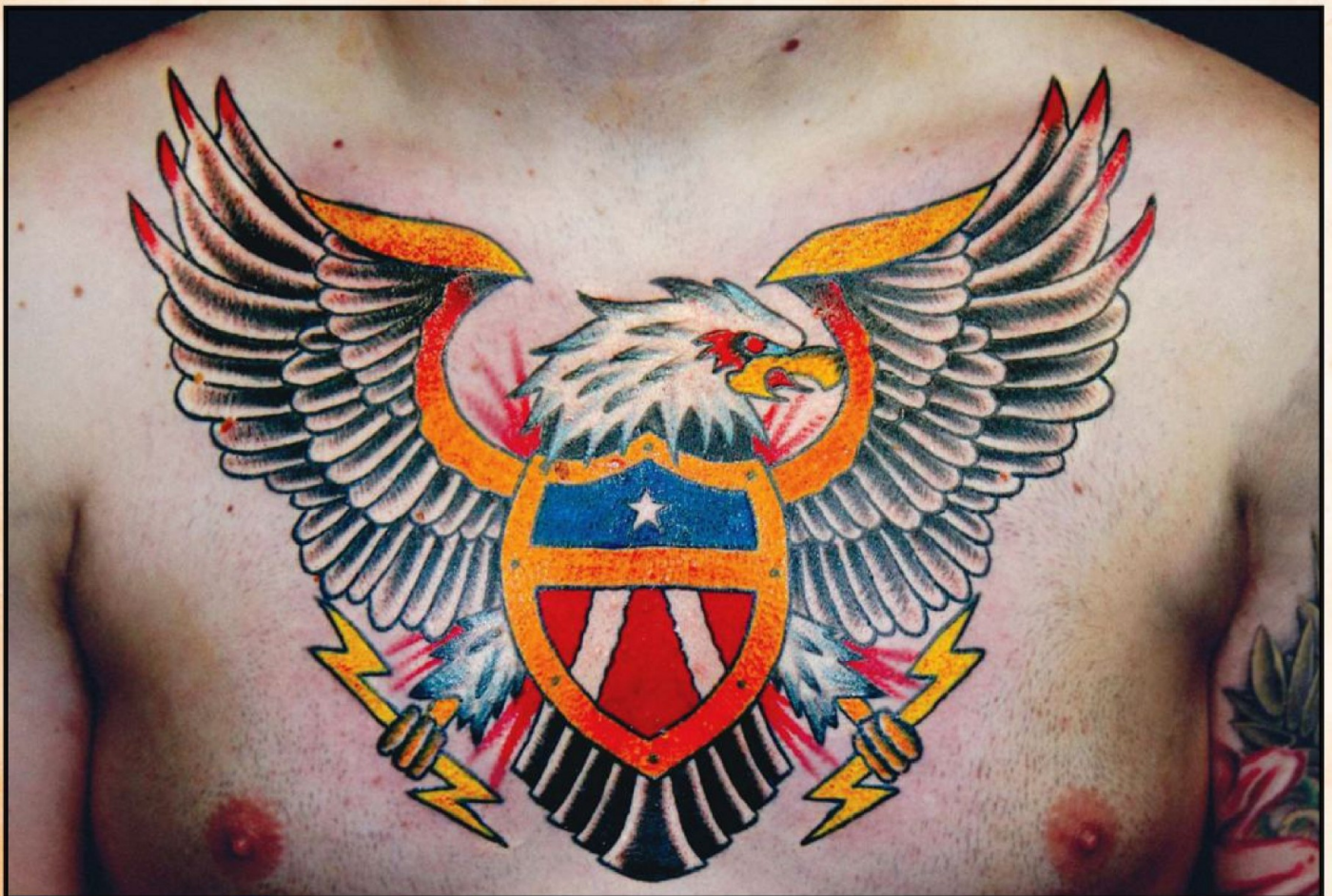


























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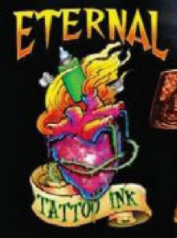
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SKIN STORYTELLER

Kurt Fagerland's Art History

By Amanda Stephan

New York's Long Island juts out into the Atlantic like a giant fat finger east of the city. Technically, the boros of Brooklyn and Queens are both part of Long Island. The area has an especially rich and colorful history, with thrilling tales of men battling with the power of the sea, plus more than its share of greed, lust and murder most foul. Born and raised on Long Island, artist Kurt Fagerland has learned to appreciate the significance of local history and the lessons that it conveys. His historical awareness has played a role in the art that he creates. "Growing up in New York, I spent a lot of time on and near the water," he said. "The east end of Long Island has a history with whaling and pirates. There is so much history there and with history comes ghost stories. I think these things have found their way into my work."

Initially Kurt went to college with plans to teach. From New York Tech, he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art, with a minor in Education. After a year of student teaching he was papered up and ready. However, he quickly discovered that teaching cramped his style. To remedy this, Fagerland continued to explore his style artistically using a variety of mediums, including pencils, oils, watercolors, wood, and stone.

Six years ago, Fagerland found a way to earn a living through his artistic expression. He began a tattoo apprenticeship under Cort Bengston of Cort's Royal Ink in Patchogue, NY. Shortly thereafter he was offered a position at Russ Abbot's Ink & Dagger in Atlanta, Georgia. "When the opportunity came for me to work at Ink & Dagger, I couldn't pass it up," Fagerland recalled. "Leaving New York was difficult, but I'm glad I did for the most part. I've learned a lot from Russ as well as from other artists that I have met through the Ink & Dagger family. I've met so many talented people. It has been inspiring."

In addition to the talent that Fagerland has encountered within the walls of Ink & Dagger, he has also been fired up by the work of artists that he has met while at guest spots at different corners of the world. Fagerland enjoys guest spots because they allow him to see new places and imagine what it would be like to be a local there. "People that make the greatest impression are ultimately people I have worked with," he said. "I did a guest spot at Guru Tattoo in San Diego in March and came away with a completely new perspective. I'm still reeling from all of the art that was thrown in my face during a short week at that shop. Aaron Della Vedova, Adam Hathorn, Jeremy Sutton, Eno, those guys have real art muscles. They're always creating art, either for tattoos or for gallery shows."

Fagerland's work as a tattoo artist has afforded him some unique opportunities in his personal life as well. His job brought him to Norway where he met family members, like his father's sister, who had never traveled to the United States.

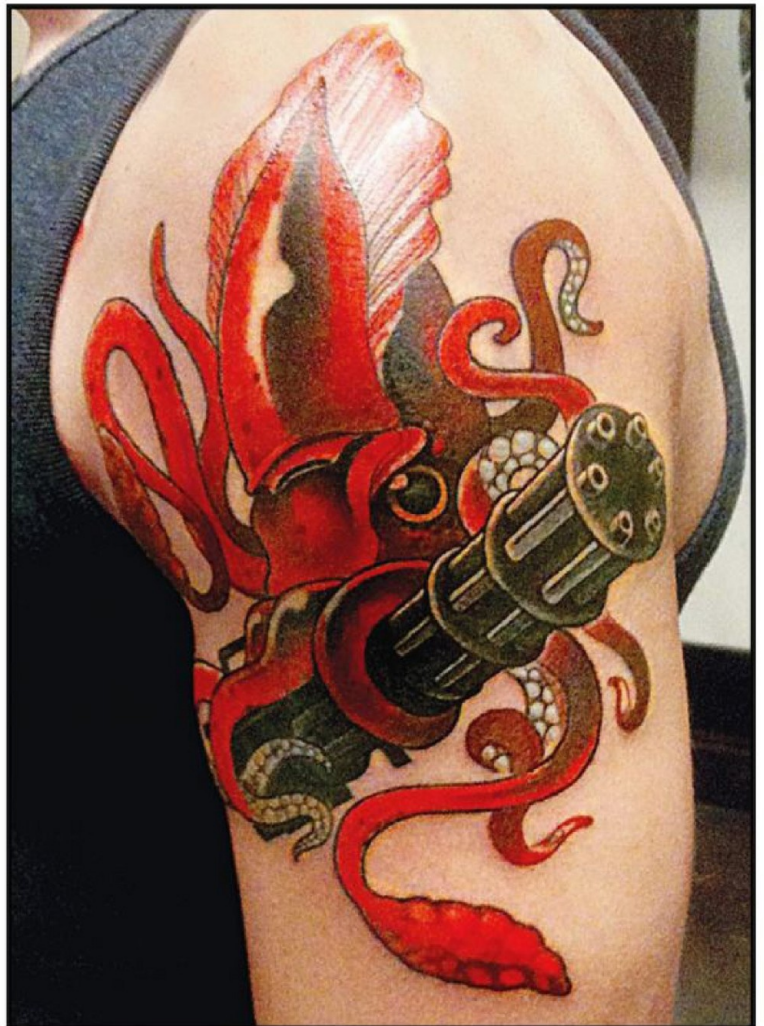
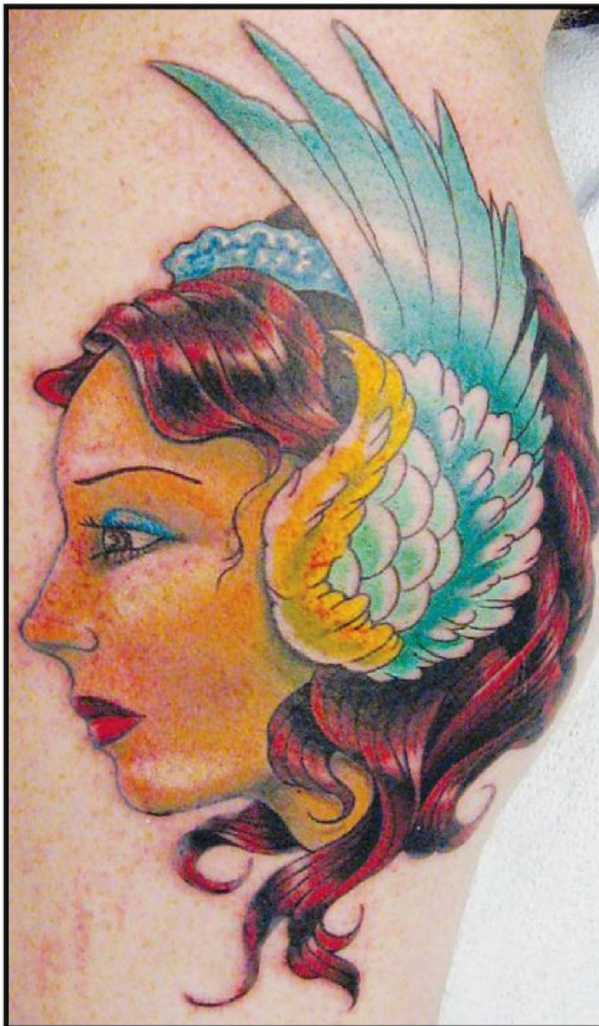
“Traditional tattooing set the rules for making a good tattoo.” –Kurt Fagerland

He now makes regular trips to Norway and does guest spots at Solid Tattoo in Stavanger. His other frequent guest spot location is South Shore Tattoo in New York. “They always treat me like family, and I have a great time working with those guys,” he said.

As Fagerland has traveled to studios around the world, he has collected tattoos from some of the artists that he meets and admires. One of the artists who stood out for Fagerland was Ron Wells. Kurt puts Wells high on his list of influences; he claims that every time he’s tattooed by Wells it’s an educational experience. Right now, however, if Fagerland could pick just one artist to collect a tattoo from, it would be Valerie Vargas. He’s really impressed with the style in which she approaches the female face. “Lately, I have been interested in collecting tattoos from more traditional tattooers,” he said. “To me, traditional tattooing set the rules for making a good tattoo. I want to explore ways to bend or break the rules where I can.”

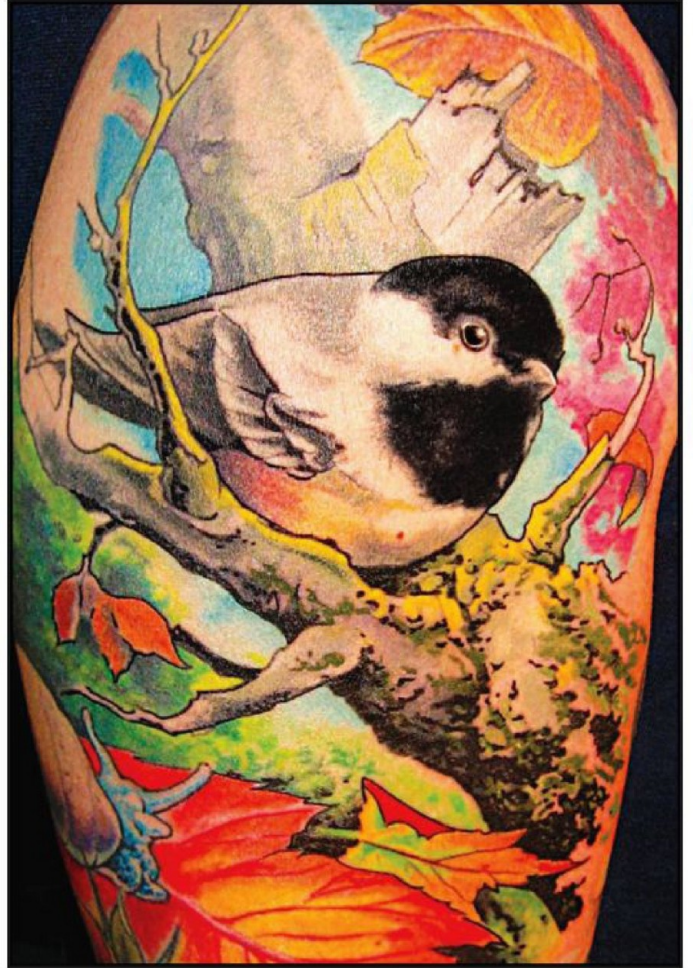
Fagerland says his own personal style is illustrative with some sort of realism mixed in. He enjoys doing tattoos that depict a variety of subject matter, but is particularly fond of skull or bird imagery and tattoos with a nautical or historical reference. Outside of tattooing, many of Kurt’s interests are rooted in nature. He spends time camping, backpacking, and kayaking whenever he can. In Fagerland’s world, mountains or campfires are always worthwhile entertainment. “Recently I’ve been studying Krav Maga,” he said, “an Israeli martial art. I’ve been able to talk some of my friends into taking classes with me.”

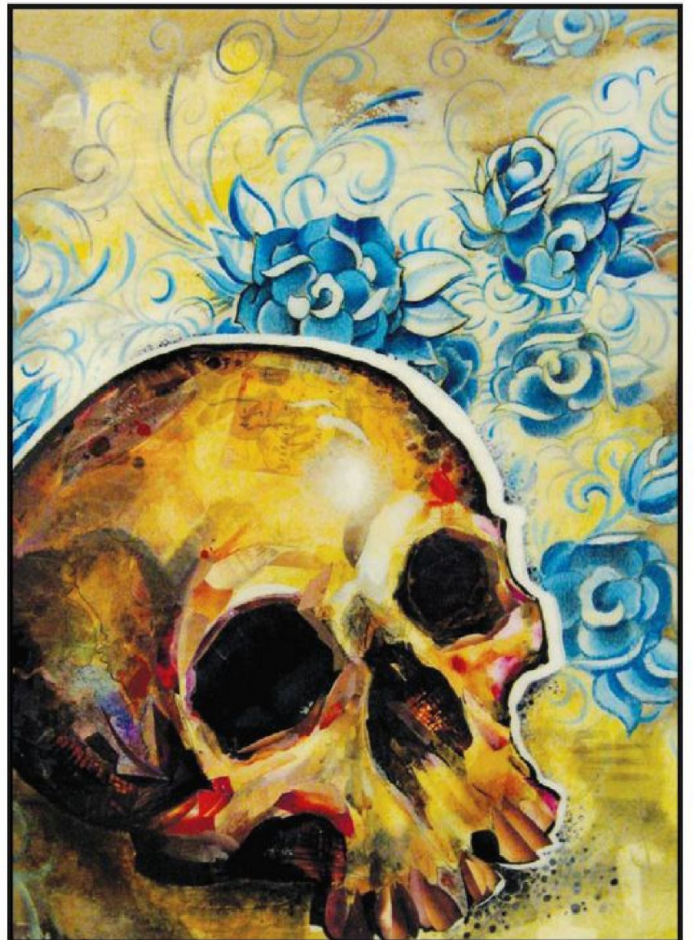
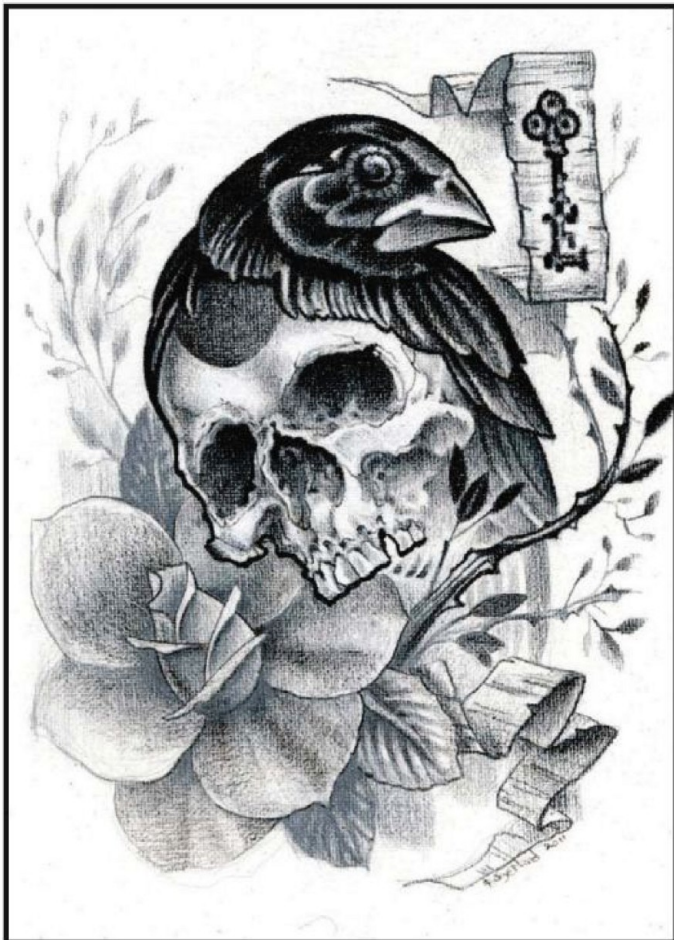
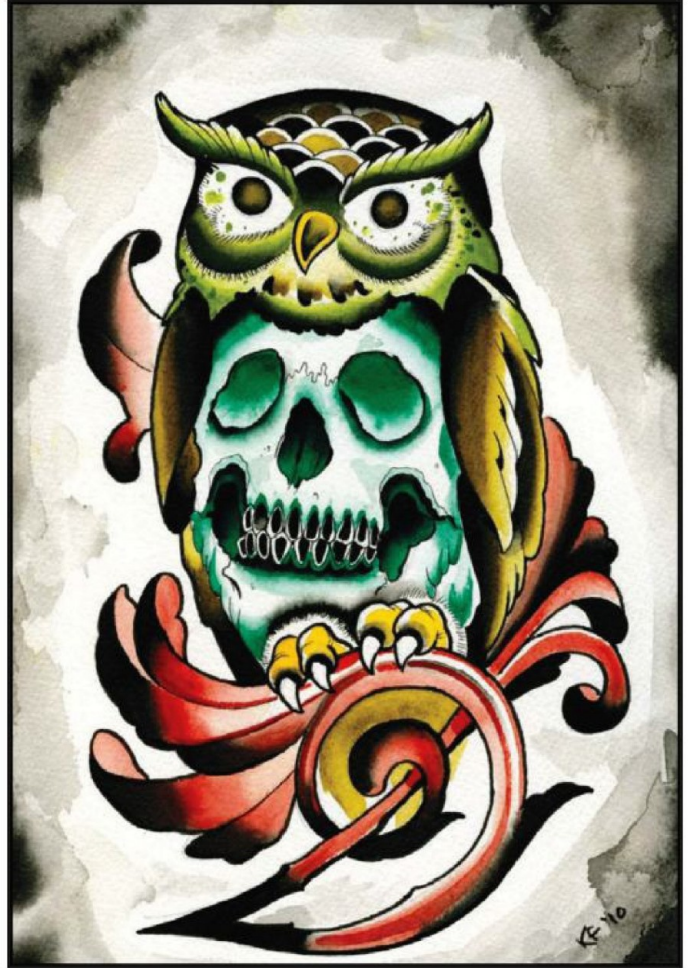
If you would like to spend some quality tattoo time with Kurt Fagerland, visit him at Ink & Dagger Tattoo Parlour in Atlanta, Georgia, or on the Web at www.kurtfagerland.com. 

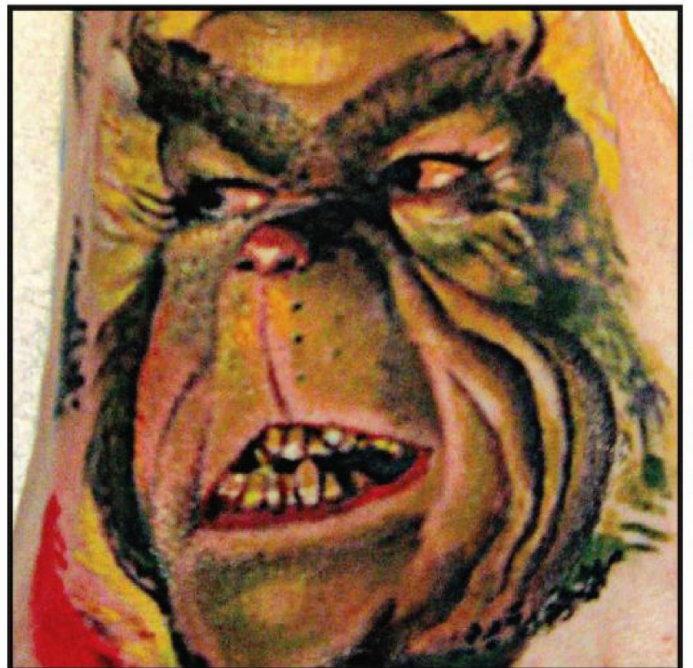










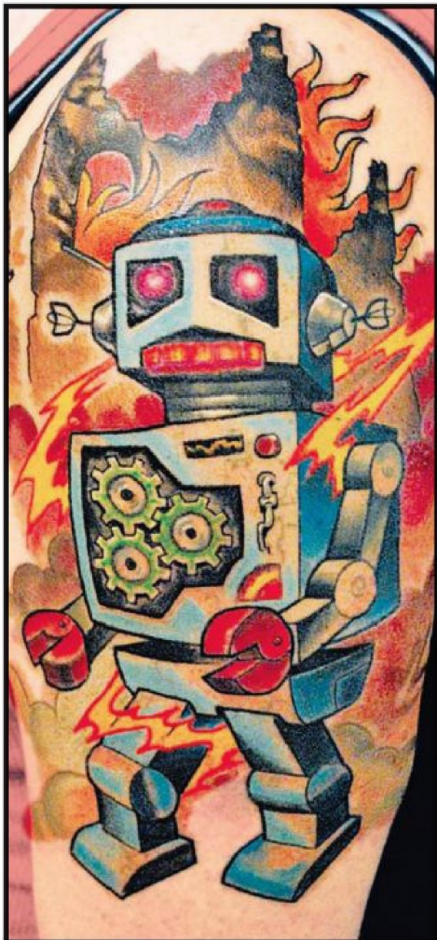












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DETROIT 2011

Where the needle meets the road



Photos by Bill DeMichele Story by Shannon

If you were to look at the Detroit tattoo convention on paper, it'd seem like the ultimate bad idea. It's in February, during the leaden dead of winter, which means bitter cold in the Motor City. And February always includes some vicious precipitation—frozen stuff falls from the sky in Detroit that doesn't even have a name—not hail, not sleet, not freezing rain, just frozen stuff.

With that as a backdrop, you book the convention into the snazziest entertainment venue in the heart of the city, which at the moment is America's most financially depressed city, during the worst nationwide depression since the 1930s.

And yet, promoter Brian Everett said, "This was the best show we've had to date."

Everett, who hosts the show with his partner Terry "Tramp" Welker, said that all the factors that seemed like negatives turned out to have a positive effect on attendance. "The weather's been so nasty," Everett said, "people had cabin fever. The time of year we have it, in February, there's not a lot of outdoor things to do. They look forward to the show every year. We have the best roster of artists anywhere in the country. All these years we've had a steady growth with the show—I don't think we've had an off year yet."

After 16 years, that's saying something. "Most of the artists that have a booth in Detroit don't ever give it up," Everett said. "Most of the people are there year after year."



Artist: Unknown



Artist: Matt Thrash




Artist: Matt Thrash

D E T R O I T

For the last six years, the convention has been held at the Renaissance Center in central Detroit. Before that, they outgrew every place they tried. When Everett first walked into the massive hall they now call home, he thought they have to include a motorcycle show or something to fill the space. Now, he said, they wouldn't even have room for a card table of Girl Scouts selling cookies.

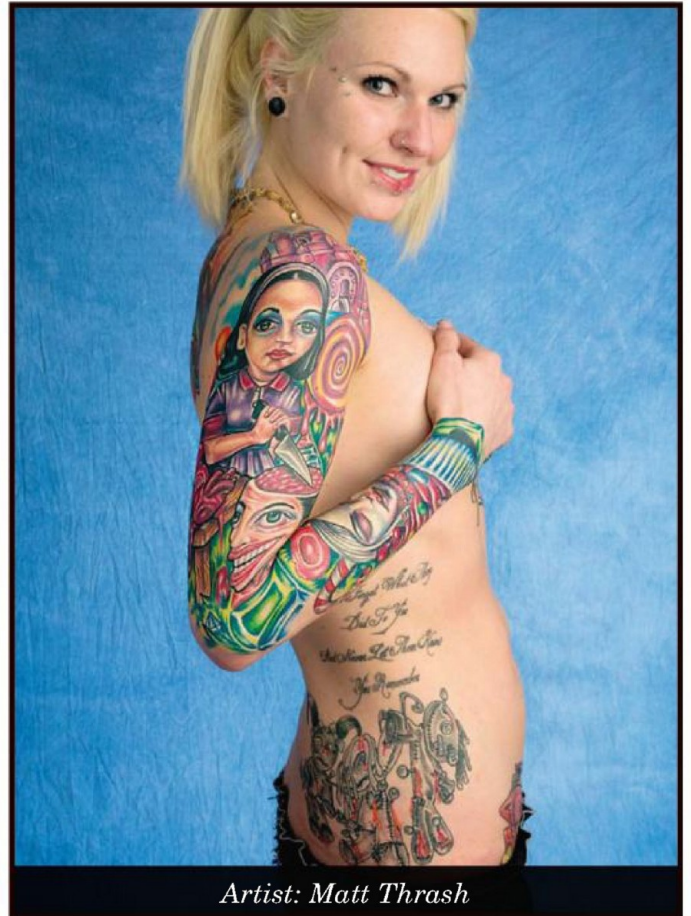
One thing they did make room for was a major surprise: the guest appearance of Corey Miller, from the TV show "LA Ink."

Among the other artists on the floor were Jack Rudy, Bob Tyrrell, Marshall Bennett, Caryl Cunningham, Mario Rosenau, Tony Ciavarro, Big Gus, Juan Puente, Mike DeMasi, Dan Henk, Scott Winskye, Ron 570, Mike DeVries, Shane O'Neill, Tony Olivas, Paul Acker, Tom Painter, Ram Lee, Joe Johns, Chad Sinkhorn, Jason Angst, Megan Hoogland, Jason Lambert, Gill Montie, Mike & Mary Skiver, Nate Beavers, Penny & James Schuhrke, Cee Jay, Richie Lucero, Eddie Garciada, Anthony Montemayor, Mike Riina, Memphis, Carson Hill, Larry Brogan, Carter Moore, Kelly Gormley, Heather Maranada, John Wayne, Oscar Bustos, Nikko Hurtado, Abey & Klown, Myke Chambers, Sean Herman, Douglas Billian, Josh Woods, Randy Prouse, Steve Martin, Ryan Thomas, Kyle & Candy Dunbar, Phil Spearman, Monte, Swany, Ish, Jeremy Miller, Scotty Munster, Beto Munzo, Jon Von Glahn, Ryan Nutin, Timmy B, Mike Emmett, Sean Peters, Mario Johnston, Damien Friesz, Matthew Clark, Jerry Riegger, Danny Knight, Richard Morisetti, Dawn Cooke, Matt Stines, Jerry Frost, Jose Acevedo, Conan Lea, Jason Ackerman, Tee Jay, Mickey Rat, Ron Meyers, Ryan Hadley, Capitol Tattoo, Dee Dee Seruga, Tom Tattoo, Ryan Jenkins, Mofo Tats, Hector Cidello, Vince Villalvazo, Kristel Oreto, Sherron DuDoit, Chris Bailore, Nate Click, Robert Price, Mike Siderio, Jason McCarty, Brian Everett, Mikey Vigilante, Geary Morill, Big Jaz, Justin LiPuna, P. Krol, Nikk D, Rick Hernandez, Sean Cummings, Timmy Bruek, Josh Gerics, Jedi, Mike Bernstein, Stelios, Gunnar, Chris 51, Audie Fulfer, Koeun (Rush) North, Matt Hockaday, Josh Fields, Matt Lukesh, Tim Boor, Max Egy, Ricco Diamante, Aaron Riddle, Russ Abbott, Wade Smith, John DeWeese, Travis King, Aaron Peters, Chris Whitney, Johnny Quinatana, Mike Pinto, Scot Ferguson, Dusty Neal, Daniel Dudek, Tony Urbanek, Kurt Melancon, Rick Harnowski, Josh Harnowski, Tony Mancia, Matt Lampi, Mat Moreno, Greg Drake, Halo, Half-Pint, Tanane Whitfield, and Billy Beans.

You can look for details on the 2012 show at www.eternaltattoos.com. 



Artist: Roman

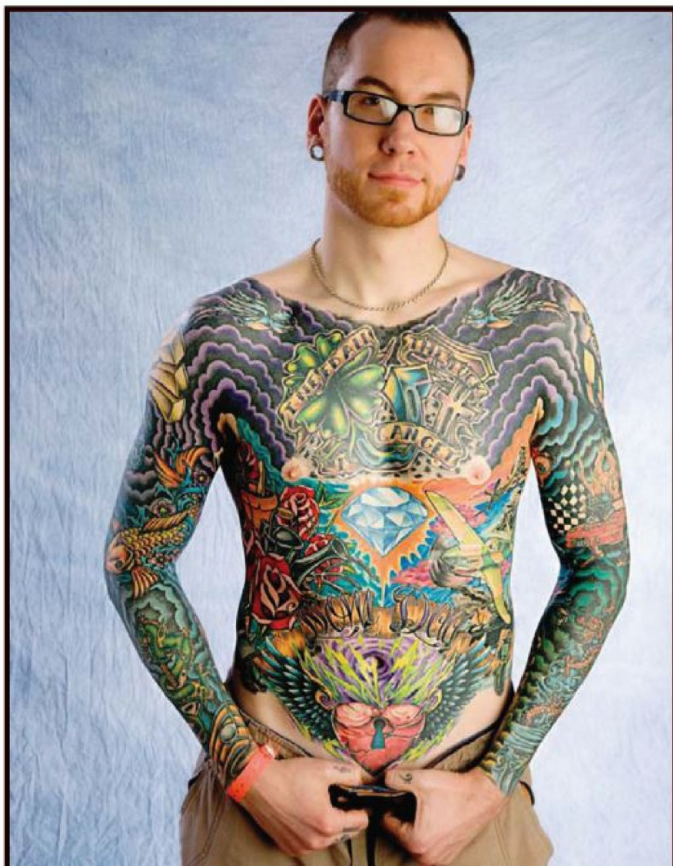


Artist: Matt Thrash

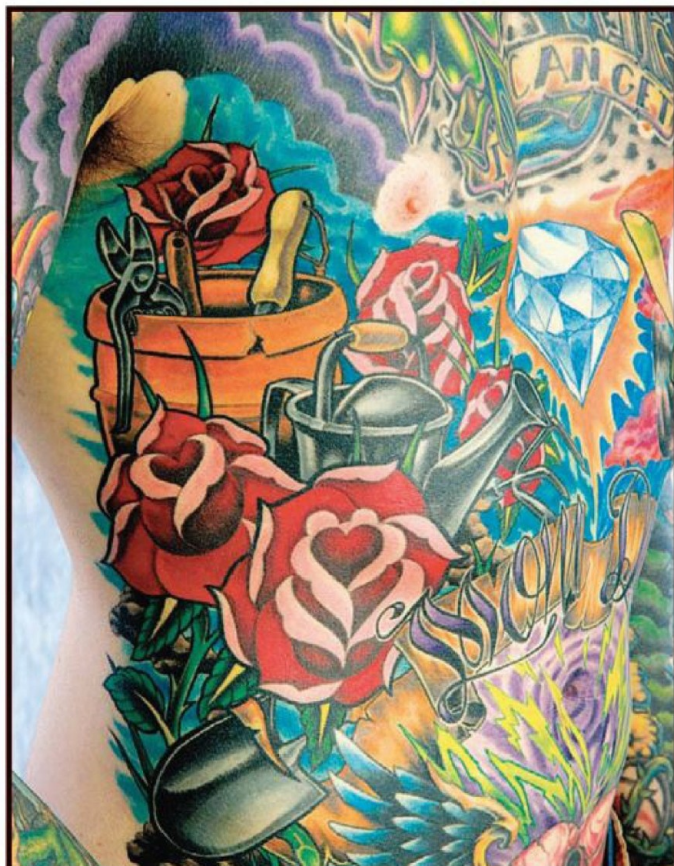
D E T R O I T



Artist: Matt Thrash



Artist: Joe Tower



Artist: Joe Tower

D E T R O I T



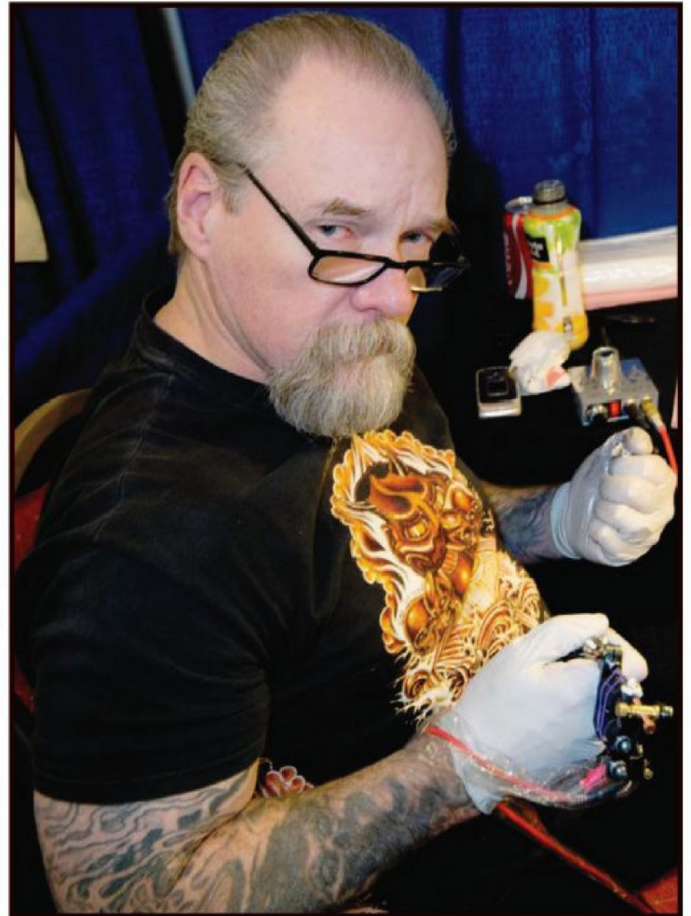
Artist: Joe Tower



Artists: Joe Tower, Ryan Flaherty



Artist: Joe Tower



D E T R O I T



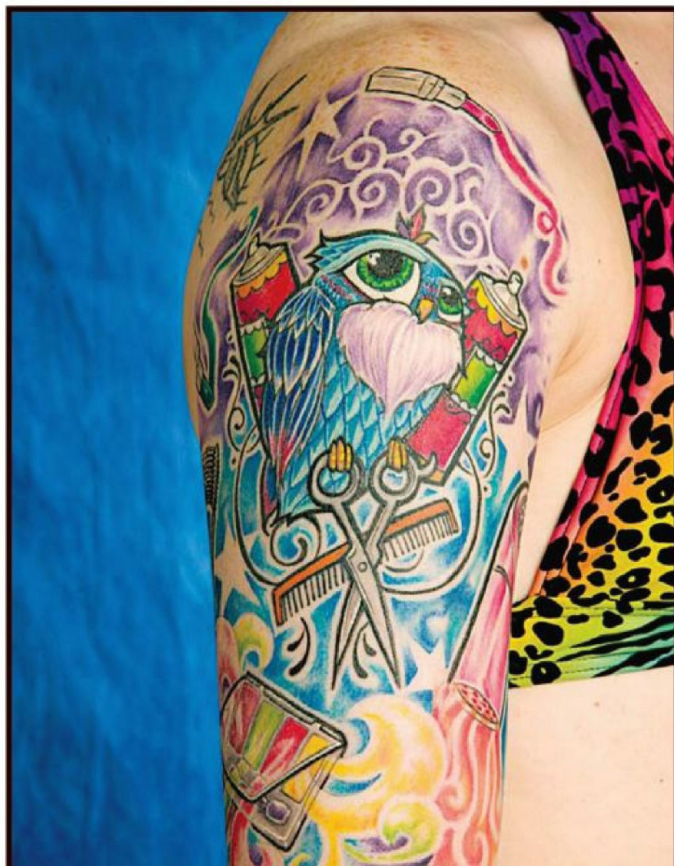
Artist: Fredrick Storey



Artist: Nic Montgomery



Artists: Chad Kleinert, Josh Gerics



Artist: Chad Kleinert

D E T R O I T



Artist: Chad Kleinert



Artist: Josh Gerics



Artist: Josh Gerics



Artist: Unknown

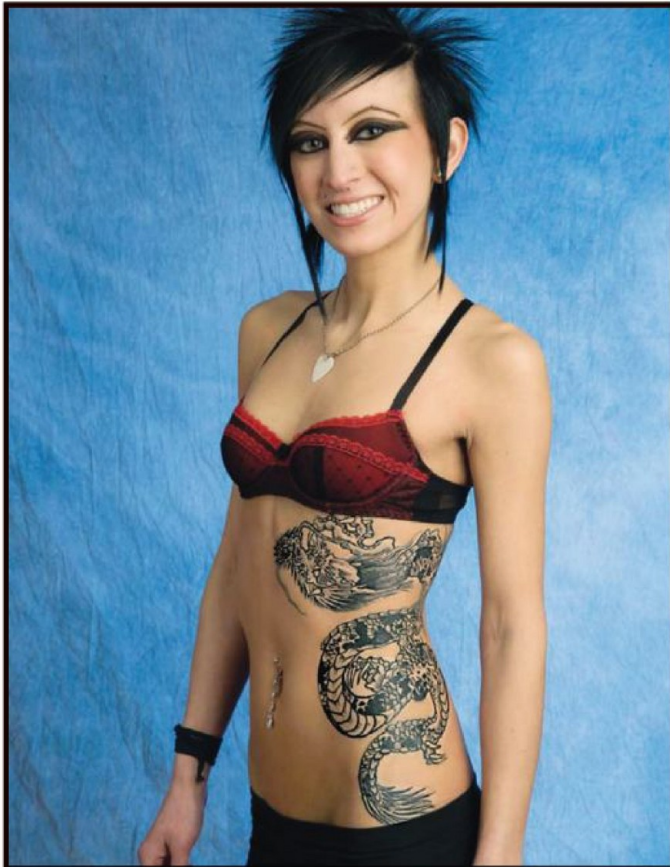
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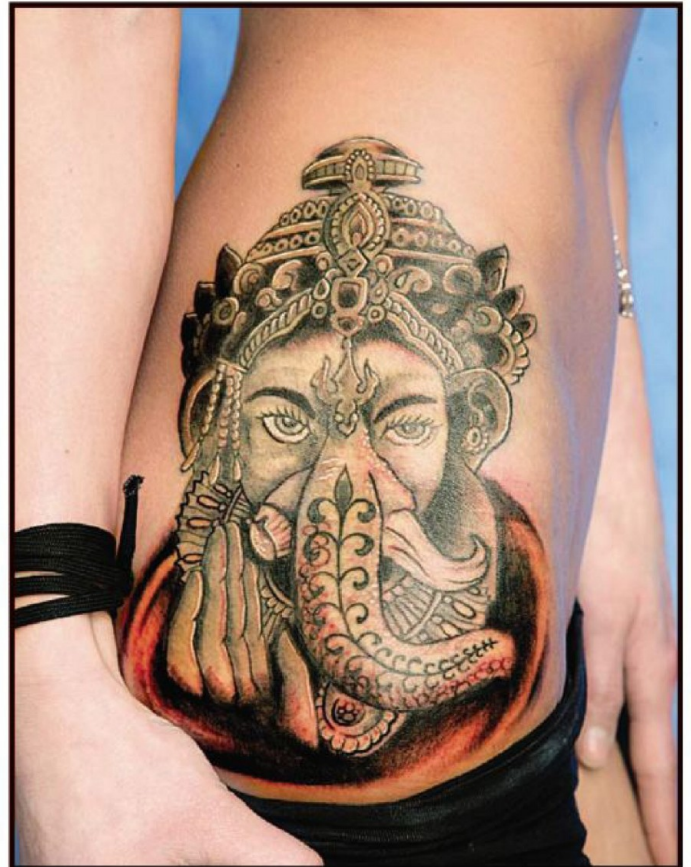
Artist: Fredrick Story



Artist: Fredrick Story



Artist: Rich Fisher



Artist: Rich Fisher

D E T R O I T



Artist: Jedi



Artist: Jedi



Artist: Carter Moore



Artist: Carter Moore

D E T R O I T



Artist: Beto Munoz



Artist: Beto Munoz



Artist: Caryl Cunningham

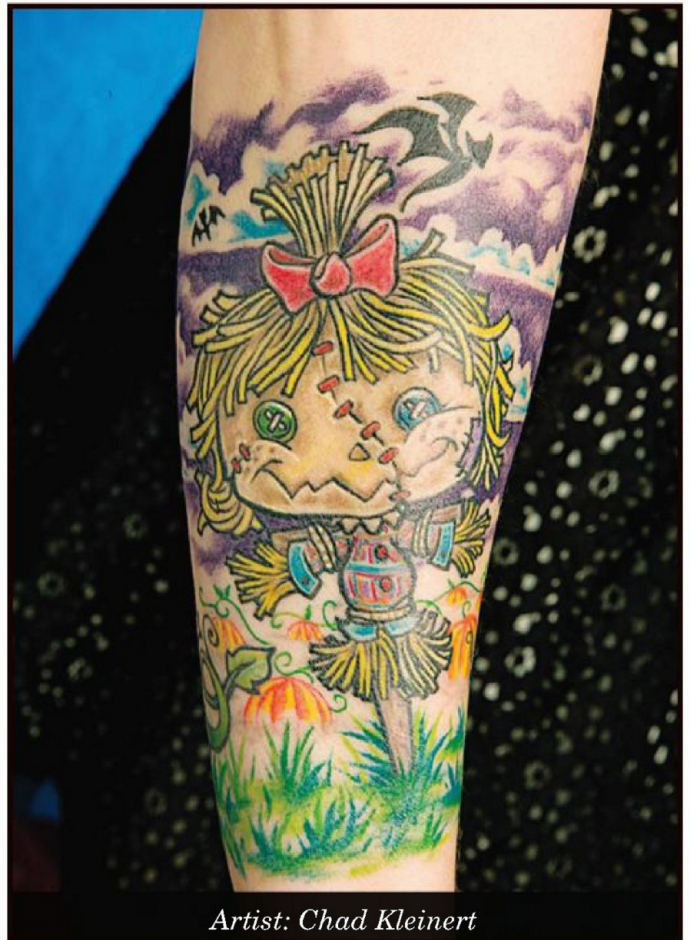


Artists: Andy Kurth, Chad Kleinert

D E T R O I T



Artist: Chad Kleinert



Artist: Chad Kleinert



Artist: Andy Kurth



Artist: Andy Kurth

D E T R O I T



Artist: Unknown



Artist: Unknown



TATTOOEDTV.COM PROUDLY PRESENTS

THE ART OF BUSINESS

THE BOSSMAN BRIAN BRENNER

"There is just as much of an art to making your business run correctly as there is to making your tattoos go down the right way!" says Brian Brenner, owner of both **TRUTH & TRIUMPH** and **SMARTBOMB TATTOO** studios. Pursuing the art of building a business is something Brenner is very passionate about. "I'm really attracted to principles that make organizations work. I've read countless books written by business moguls and basically any type of speaker on the subject of business. I can't get enough!" Obviously so. Not only is Brenner the leader of one of the biggest tattoo companies around but also very much involved in the extensive multimedia marketing his company does; on top of filming and producing his own tattoo web show **TATTOOED TV.COM**! Anyone who knows Brenner will tell you he's no stranger to long workdays and, when it comes to business, he's well equipped to handle it in a big way! "Busy is the only way I know how to be," says Brenner, "and I wouldn't trade it for anything!"

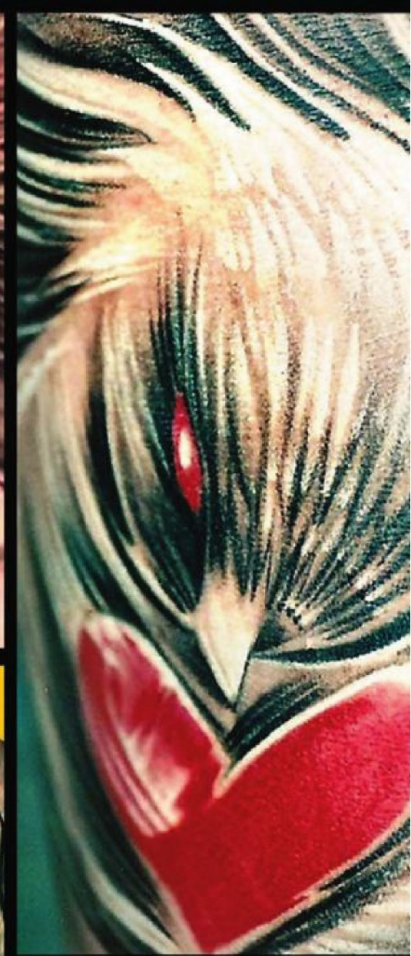


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WWW.TRUTHANDTRIUMPHTATTOO.COM

All tattoos by Brian Brenner







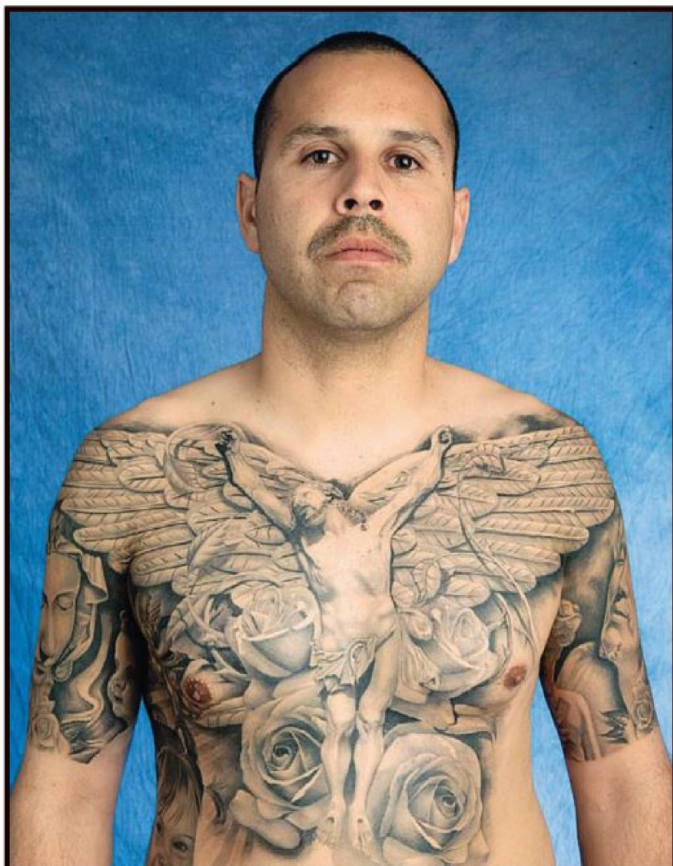
D E T R O I T



Artist: Sean Meraw



Artist: Sean Meraw

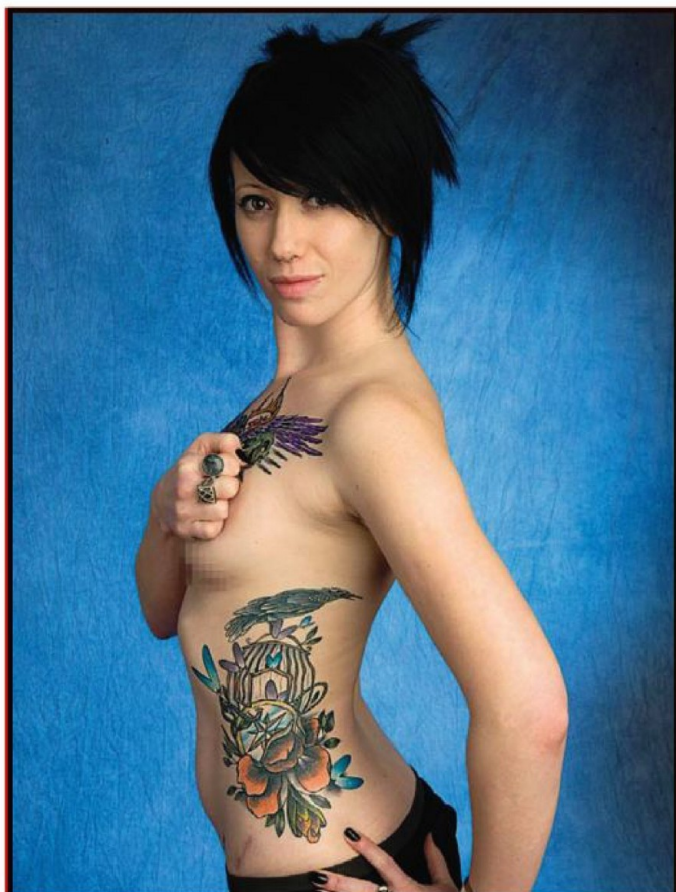


Artist: Abey Alvarez



Artist: Abey Alvarez

D E T R O I T



Artist: Sean Meraw



Artist: Abey Alvarez



Artists: Brady Duncan, Dawn Cooke, Frank Williams

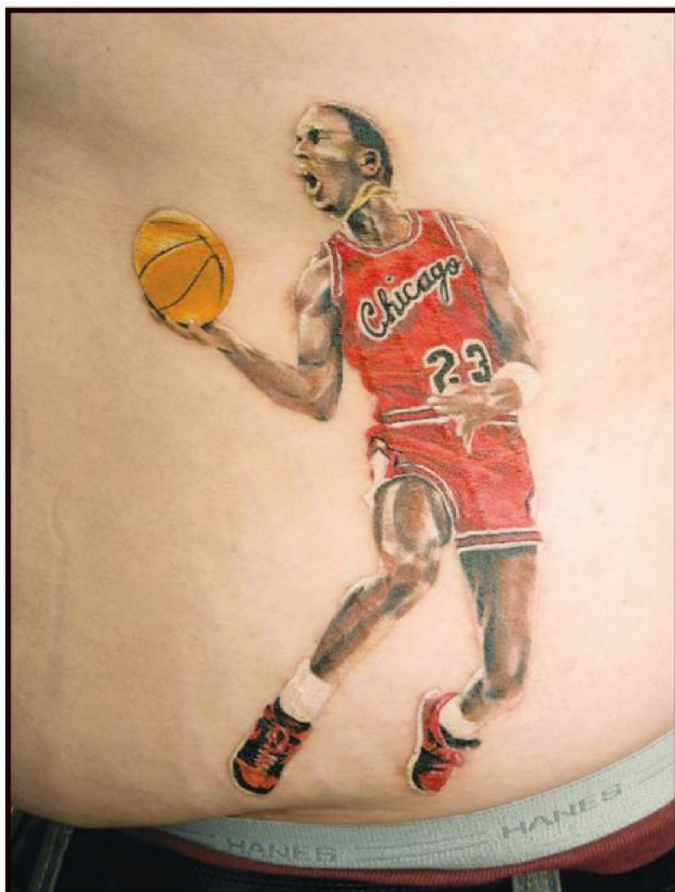


Artist: Brady Duncan

D E T R O I T



Artist: Dawn Cooke



Artist: Nikk D



Artists: Various



Artist: D. Krol

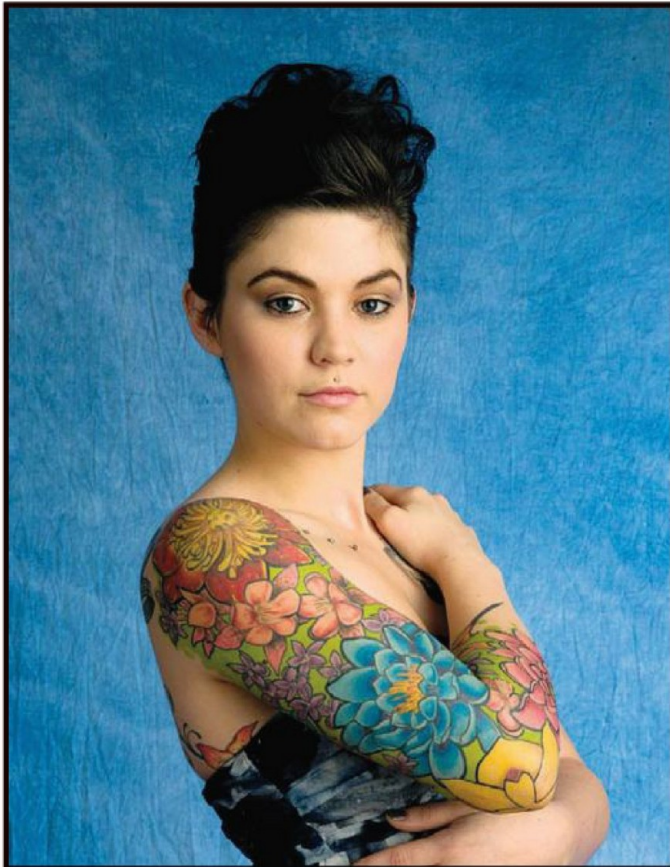
D E T R O I T



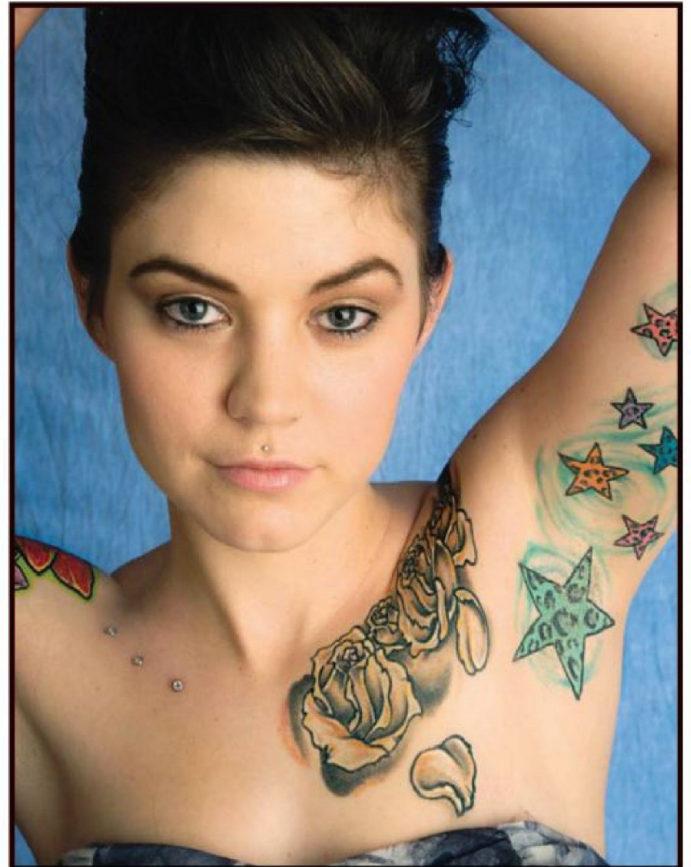
Artist: Andy Kurth



Artist: D. Krol



Artist: Ryan Brown



Artists: Ryan Brown, Woody

D E T R O I T



Artist: Unknown



Artist: Ryan Brown



Artist: Josh Gerics



Artist: Josh Gerics, Tyler Hayes

D E T R O I T



Artist: Ryan Brown



Artist: Tim Orth



Artist: Hank Hernandez



D E T R O I T





D E T R O I T





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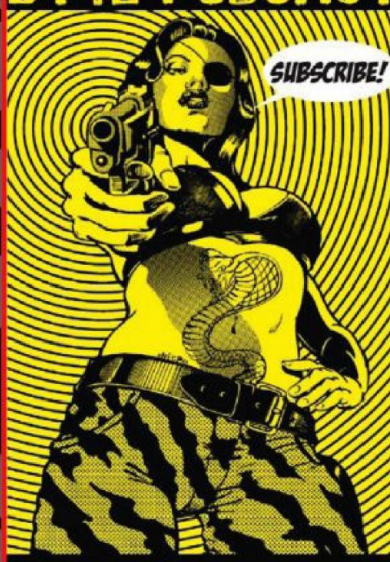
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RENDERED TENDER

TATTOOS BY AARON PETERS

By Amanda Stephan

Ever since his artistic beginnings, Aaron Peters has admired the ability to render an object in a realistic way; the skill to make two-dimensional art appear to be three-dimensional. "By far, realism is my favorite style," he said.

"I appreciate the technical skill that all styles have to offer, but I just lean more towards realism. I think it's the ultimate achievement in any art form. It represents a solid and proper understanding of value, light and shade, perspective, and proportion, among many others. These are fundamentals that most other styles don't have to adhere to or follow."

In Aaron's opinion, Frank Frazetta and Boris Vallejo both epitomized this talent. He appreciated how flawlessly these artists captured human anatomy and how they employed light and shading in this pursuit. Painters Basil Gogos, Alphonse Mucha, and Albrecht Durer, along with comic book artists like Todd McFarland, Jim Lee, Bill Sienkiewicz, and Frank Miller, were many of the influences who shaped Peters' early art.

Eager to develop his artistic skills into a career, Peters enrolled in the American Academy of Art in Chicago. In the late '90s, Peters spent a year majoring in illustration, but also took courses in figure drawing and oil painting. "I have both negative and positive opinions regarding art school," Peters said, "but I will say that I owe some of my accomplishments in art to some of my very talented and skilled instructors from the time I was there. I had been drawing and doing art my whole life and thought I was well-rounded going into art school, but they definitely helped raise my artwork another notch."

During his sojourn in art school, Peters dreamed about a career in comic book illustration. However, he soon realized that he would be highly unlikely to break into that field. Instead, he shifted his focus to graphic design, even

“I didn’t start this career to be someone average.”

taking classes at Indiana University Northwest in Gary. Eventually, Peters became disenchanted with all facets of school and withdrew from studies. Around that time, he discovered that one of his friends from high school was working as a tattooist.

This information stirred something inside him, and for the first time Peters began to consider tattooing for a living. “I never really considered tattooing as a career option,” he said. “I always thought it was an interesting art form and I had a few tattoos myself, but the thought of pursuing a career in tattooing never crossed my mind. I was ignorant about the sophisticated levels of art that tattooing was able to achieve.”

Peters contacted his former classmate, Daniel Lewter, and asked him some questions about professional tattooing. “I wasn’t looking for a hookup of any sort,” he said. “I was just fascinated and interested in the artistic aspect of the job.” Fortunately, Lewter was able to assist Peters beyond just providing insight into the field. When his shop had an opening for an apprentice, Lewter invited Peters to fill the slot.

From the moment that he tried his hand at tattooing, he knew that he had found his purpose. “Once I started, I immediately knew that this career was the right choice and it became a burning passion,” he said. “When I started tattooing I felt like such a novice, and so far behind anyone else, which I was, but it drove me to try and progress as fast as I could. I experimented with different techniques

and equipment all the time, every chance I could. Every other medium or art form took a back seat.”

With Peters immersed in tattooing, painting fell so far to the wayside that he didn’t pick up a brush for four years. He was committed to honing his tattoo talent. But when he reached a comfortable skill level in tattooing, he began to dabble in paint once again. “I prefer the smooth realism that can be obtained from oil paints,” he said. “I also like to use just charcoal or pencil as well as conte crayon to achieve dramatic monochromatic work. Growing up, I pretty much always drew and sketched in pencil and was forced to differentiate colors by using different values in my sketches. I think that’s why, when I started tattooing, I seemed to grasp black and grey work pretty fast and well.”

Peters is eager for the day that his tattoo work is easily identified as his own. “Even though I am primarily a portrait artist,” he said, “I think I have a distinct style. I try to achieve a dark, dramatic mood in my work. I love using black and grey shading with my color work to create muted tones, and to achieve an overall more realistic look in my work.” At the 2010 Detroit Motor City Tattoo Convention, he won two awards, which is a great source of pride. Even more significant than the awards was the praise that Peters received from his peers. He was thrilled to be complimented by some of the artists whom he had long looked up to.


The three tattoo artists whom Peters most admires are Joshua Carlton, Jeff Gogue, and Robert Hernandez.

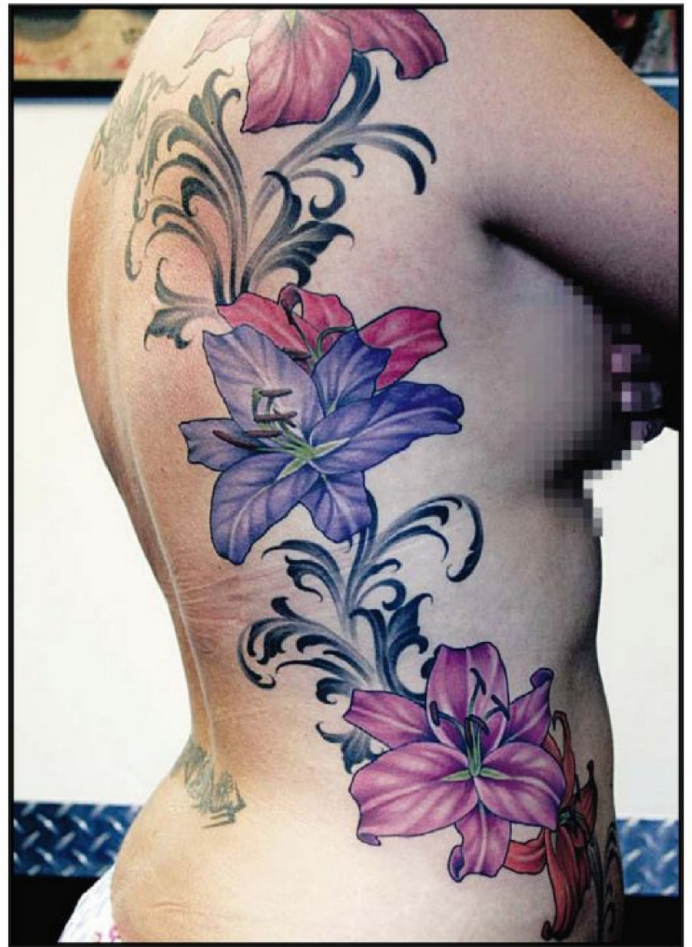


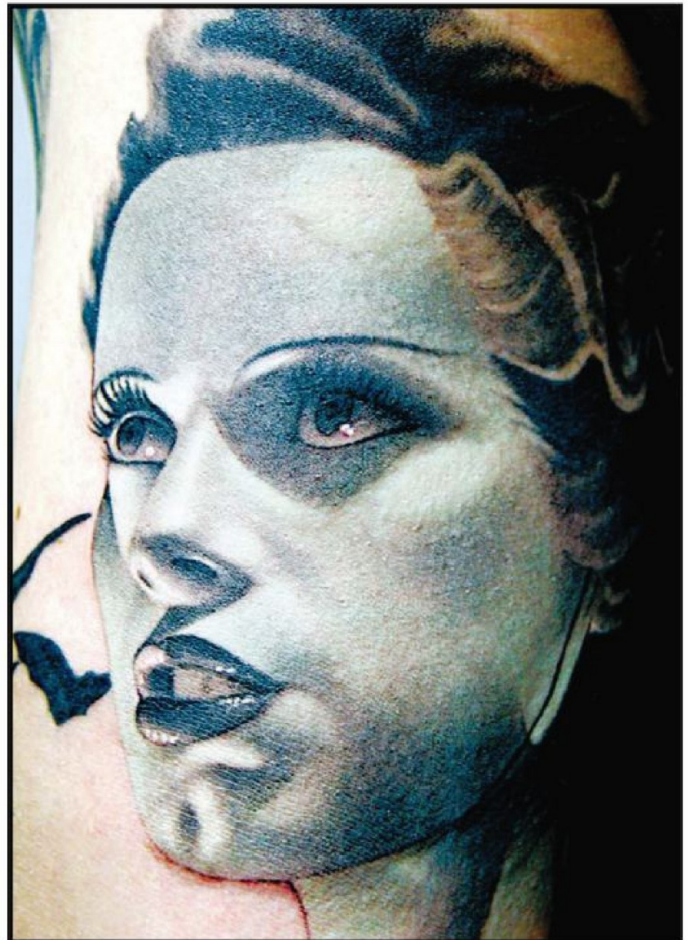
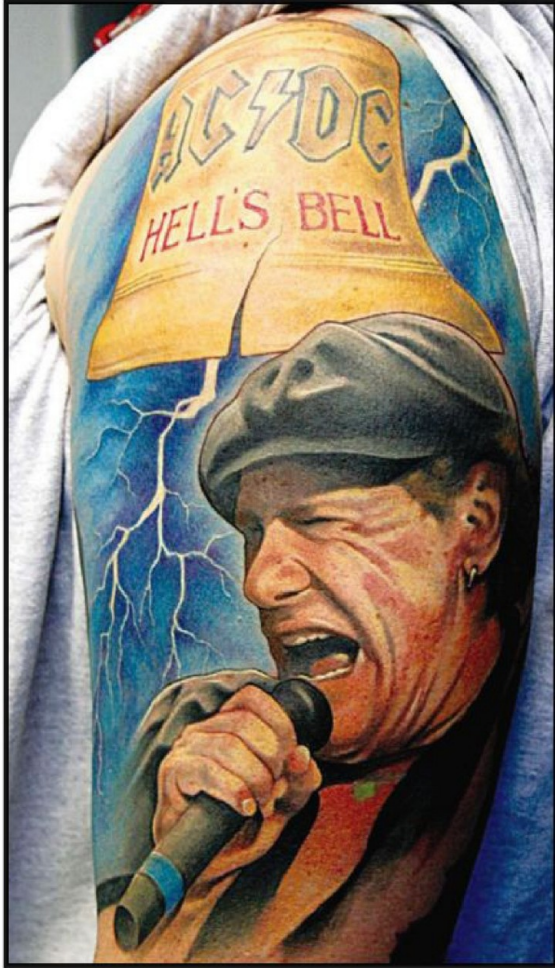
With each of these artists, Peters appreciates the manner in which black is employed in a tattoo. He believes that black establishes the mood and drama in a tattoo. "The bright colorful realism stuff is awesome and technically great, but it just doesn't appeal to me at all," Peters said. "I never once wanted to tattoo like that. While I am inspired by these guys, I don't want to or try to copy what they do. I think I already had a natural inclination to use black heavily in some of my work, so they logically appealed to me as inspirational artists."

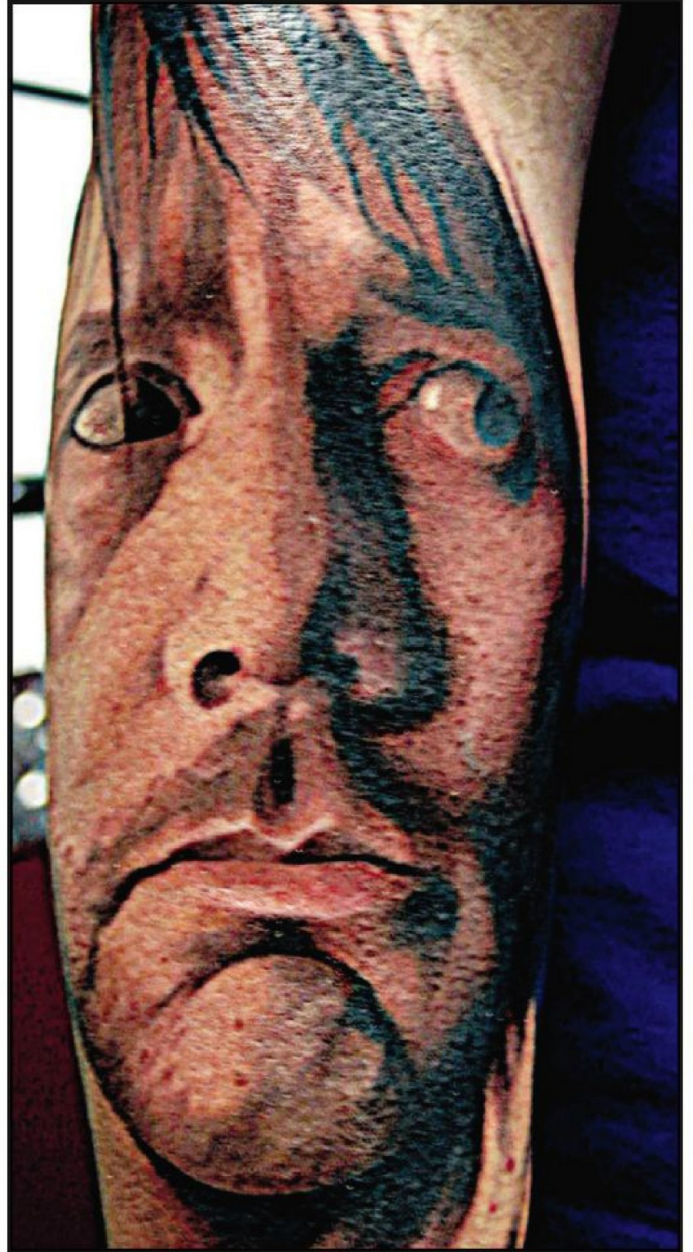
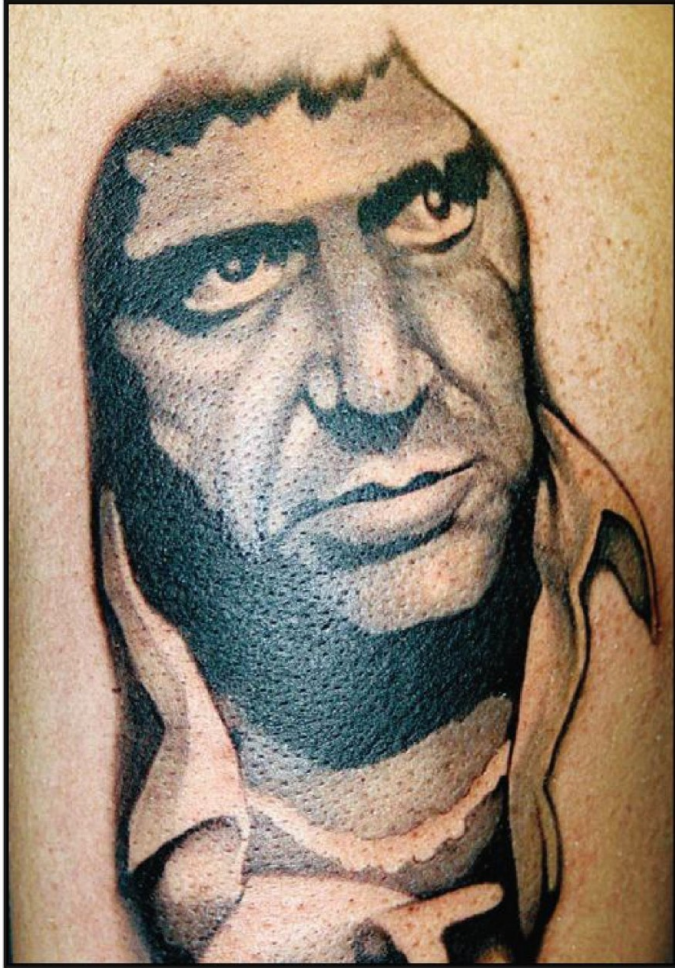
Peters feels fortunate that he gets to work with inspirational artists everyday at Bugaboo Tattoo, the shop that serves as his home base. He's originally from Northwest Ind., and grew up in the town of Griffith, which he currently calls home. When he landed his apprenticeship at a shop in nearby Hammond, he imagined one day working at Bugaboo, a studio that had earned a great deal of respect. "In my opinion, it was the most reputable shop in the area," Peters said. "So when the opportunity to work at Bugaboo came around, I took advantage of the chance to work there."

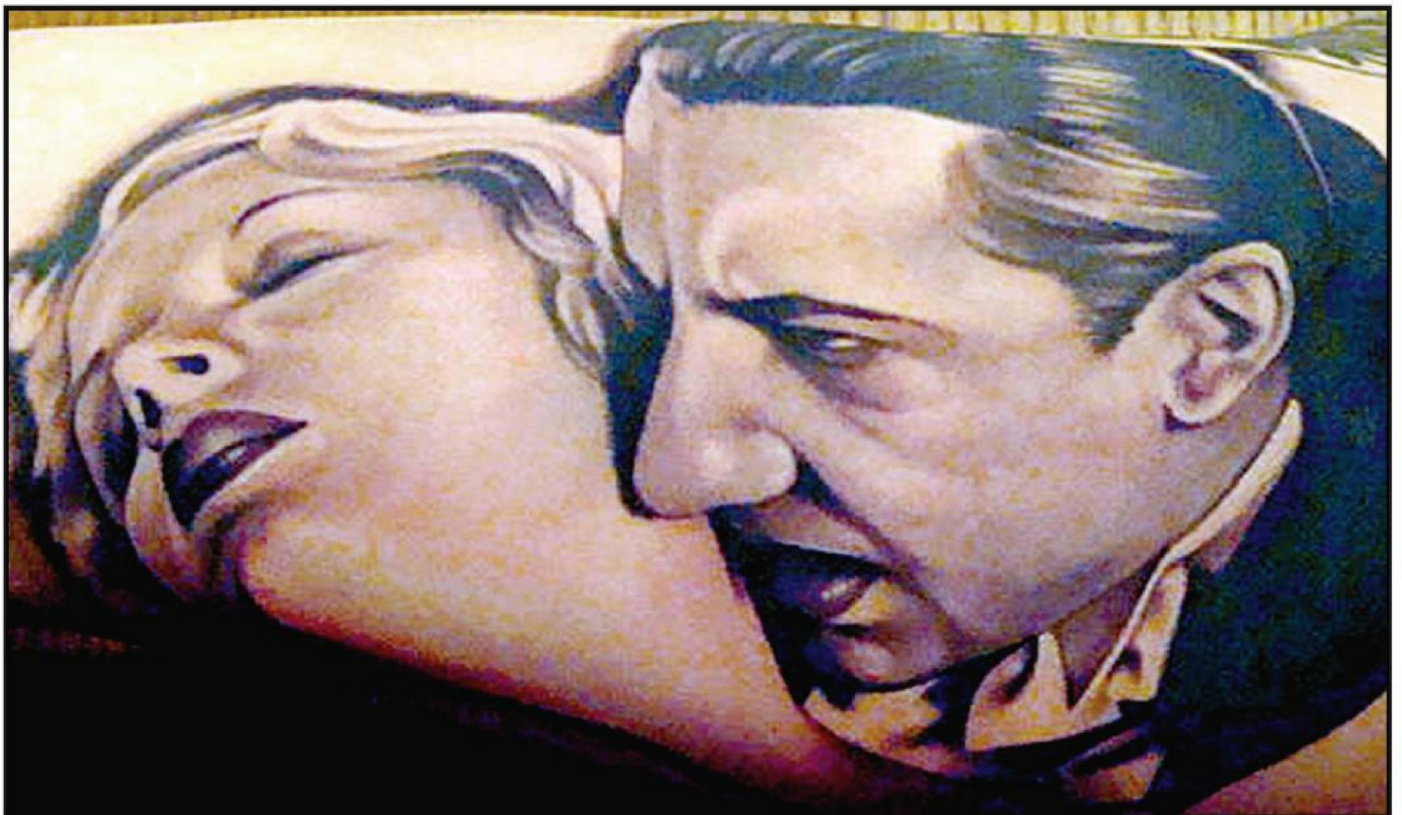
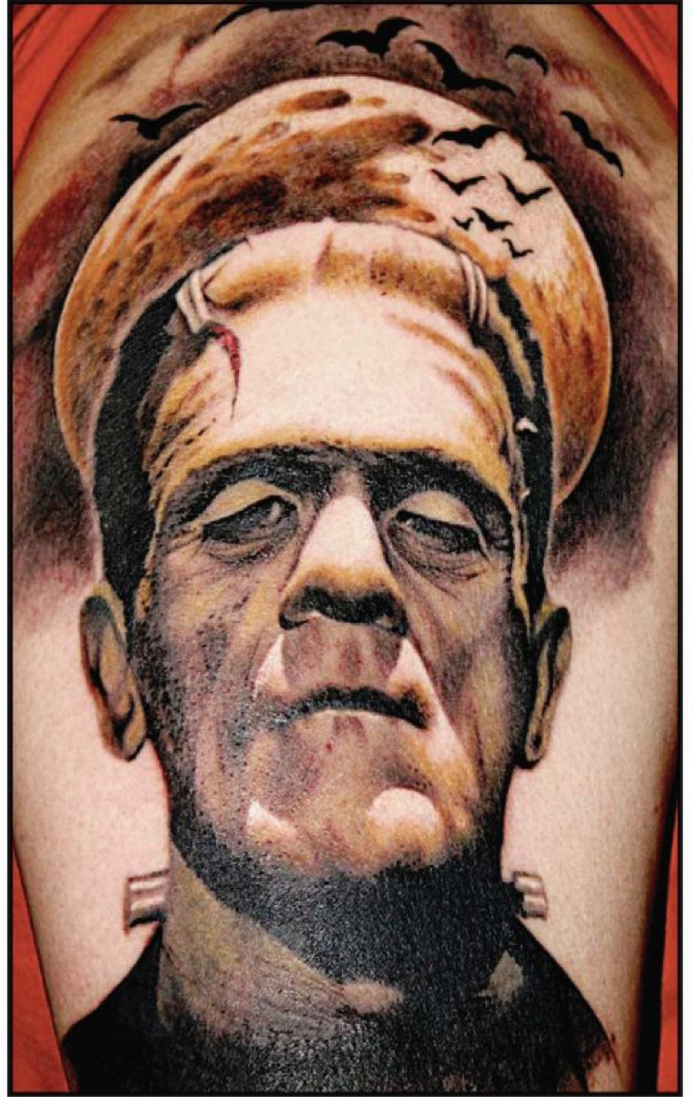
Peters feels he has plenty of room to grow ahead of him. "I have only been tattooing for a few years," he said, "so there is so much more I want to achieve in this industry. I didn't start this career just to be someone average. I want to be someone respected and admired. I hope to be an inspiration to other upcoming artists one day."

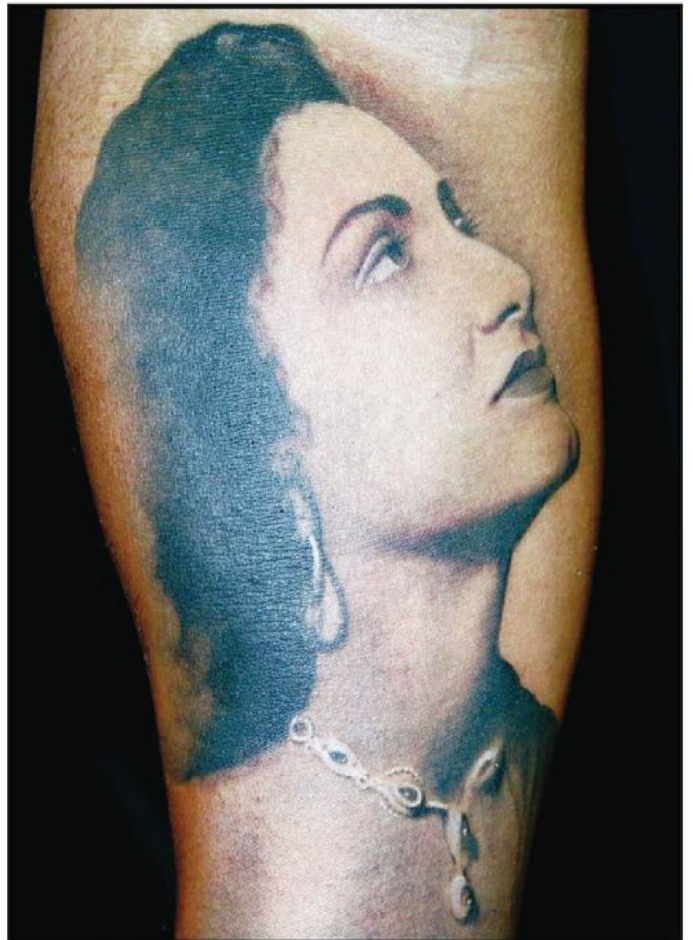
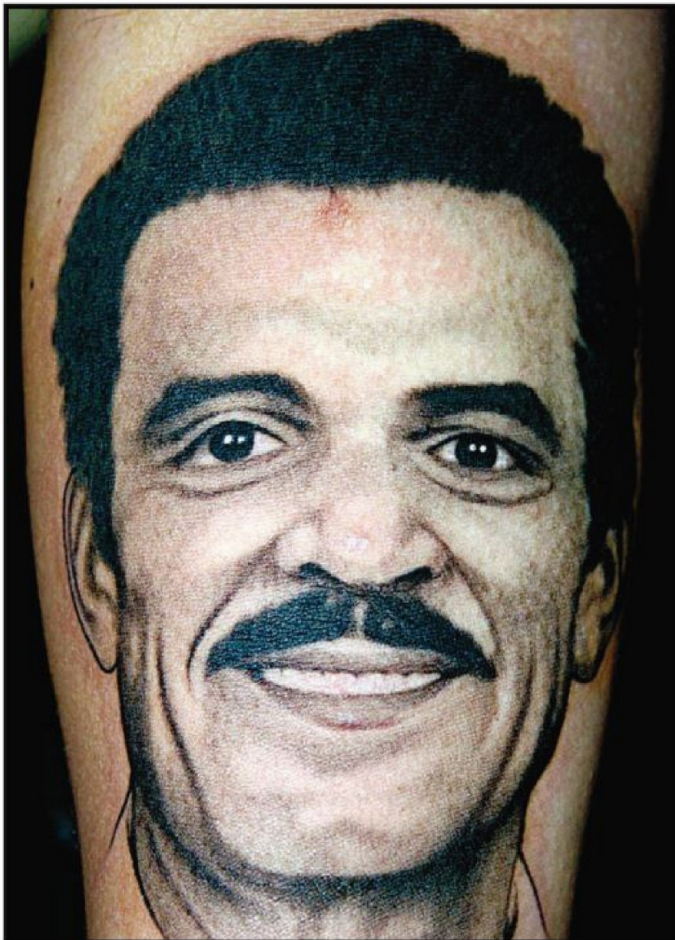
Contact Aaron Peters at Bugaboo Tattoo, 7014 Kennedy Ave, Hammond, Ind. He can also be reached via e-mail from the shop website, www.bugabootattoo.com. 

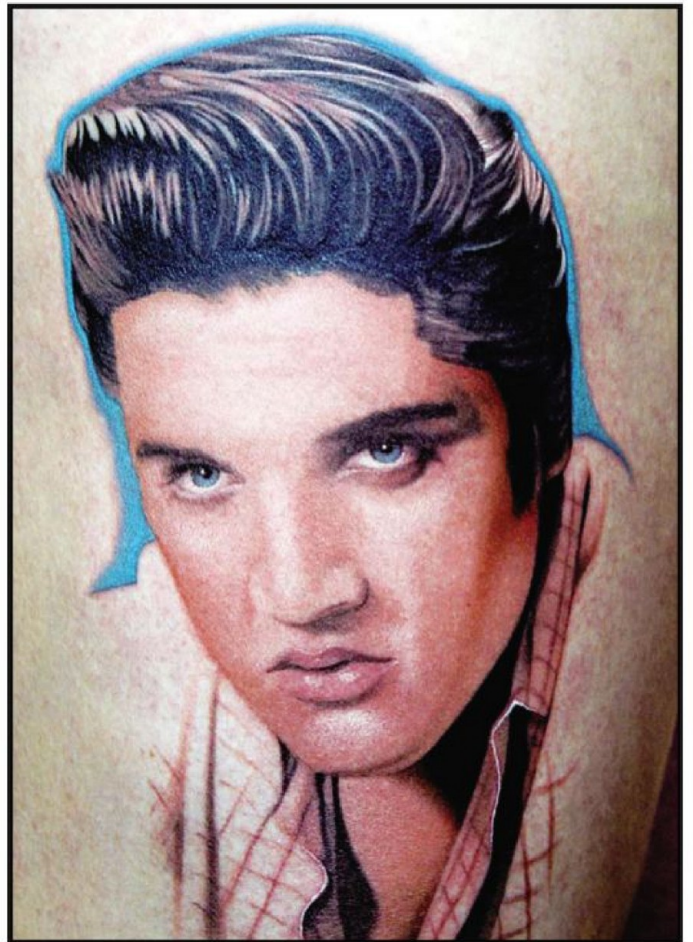
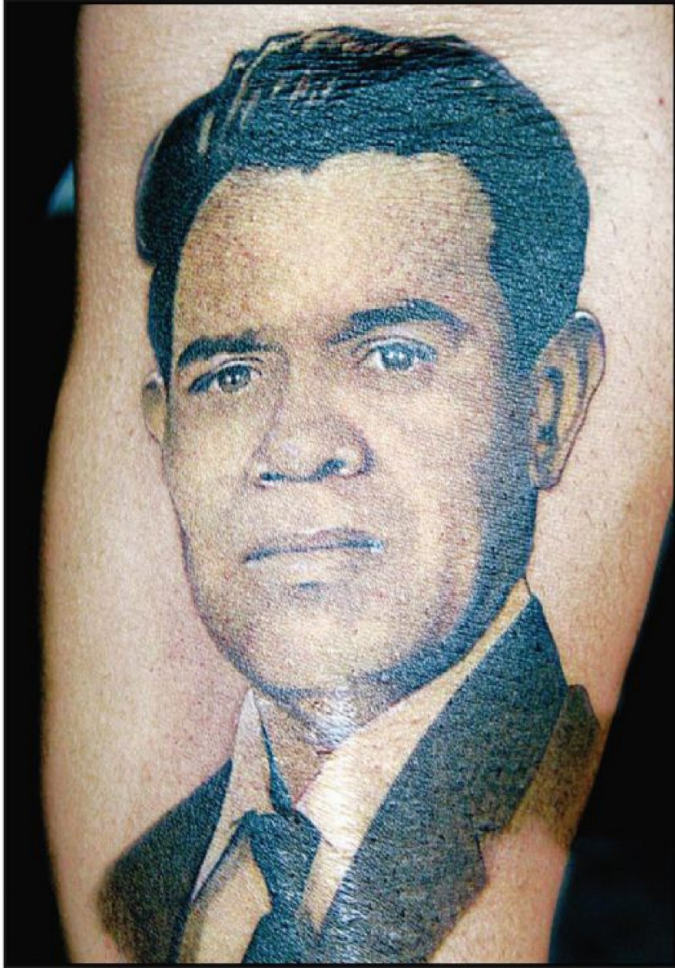


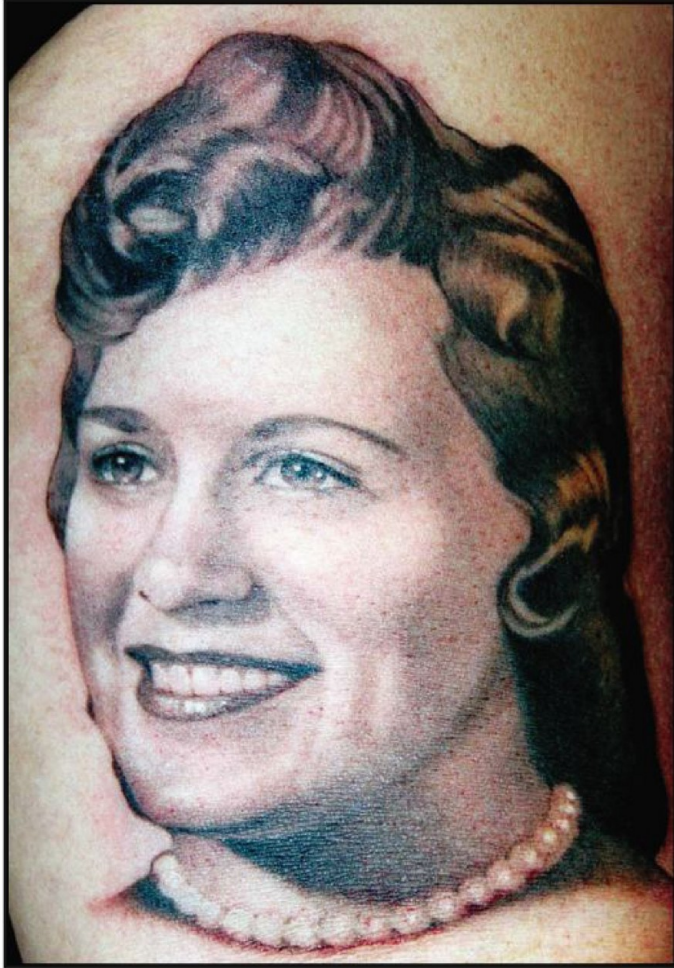


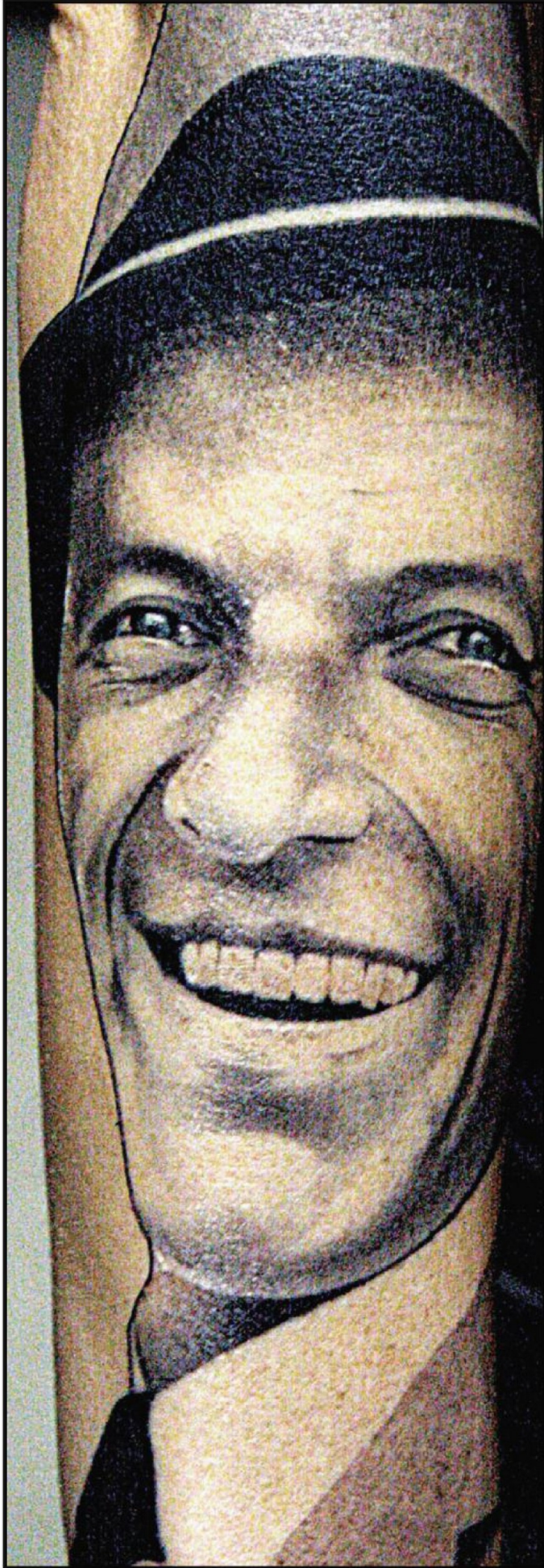












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ON THE MOVE

ZACK SPURLOCK'S ARTISTIC STRIDES

By Amanda Stephan

AT AGE 17, WHEN ZACK SPURLOCK FIRST FANTASIZED ABOUT BECOMING A TATTOO ARTIST, it didn't seem likely that his fantasy would become a reality. He grew up in Charleston, South Carolina, where the practice of tattooing was still years away from being legalized. Spurlock also felt that any professional plans would have to wait until he finished his studies in college. He pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art, focusing on painting. Throughout his schooling, he held a variety of jobs to tide him over until he felt prepared to commit to tattooing. These jobs included piloting a bicycle taxi and serving as the "magazine guy" at a local bookstore. The latter allowed Zack to stay abreast of the latest trends in tattooing. This kept the aspiring tattooist motivated to find his entry into the tattoo community.

Once he earned his degree, Spurlock moved to Savannah, Georgia, and began to seek out an apprenticeship. He was 21 years old when he finally found what he was looking for. In the 10 years that have passed since that apprenticeship began, Spurlock has never doubted that he made the right choices in the past, and he's confident about the future. "In ten years, I will absolutely be tattooing," he said. "I will ride this out through every incarnation, whether tattooing goes back to carnivals or continues on the TV route. I'll just keep my head down and stay focused. I hope to continue to make people happy through tattooing by giving them a product I feel is going to last. I'll continue to tattoo as long as tattooing will have me, or until my hand gets crippled."

In order to keep his body in peak form as an instrument of art, Spurlock spends as much time as he can running. "Running is nice," he said. "I like running outside at night after a long day of being hunched over tattoos, but other than that, art occupies most of any spare time." The art that Spurlock creates in his "free" time is usually related to his tattooing. He doesn't often work on paintings anymore, but when he does, he generally uses acrylics on paper.

Spurlock's fine art education does take shape in some of his non-tattoo ventures. One such venture is a fine fabric store, Fabrika, which he co-owns in Savannah. However, in terms of his tattoo art, Spurlock does not believe that his B.F.A. has been a true asset. "It hasn't helped in the technical aspects of tattooing," he said. "Painting and tattooing are not the same, and they never will be. Paint forms a bond with the paper or canvas and tattoo pigment is suspended in decaying flesh."



**“IT IS NOT ABOUT ME AND MY VISION. I’M JUST STEERING;
THE CLIENTS ARE SHOUTING THE DESTINATION.”**




ZACK SPURLOCK

WorldMags

His fellow tattoo artists have been more valuable to Spurlock than his college education. He has been inspired by the talents he has worked with, including Clay McCay and Katie Sellergren. "Clay McCay has been a mentor and friend for eight years now," Spurlock said. "It is great to get to work with one of your favorite artists. Katie Sellergren is another huge inspiration for me. She taught me how to paint tattoos and write script, the real fundamentals of tattooing. I'd be nothing without their guidance. I owe my career to them."

As much as he admires his coworkers, if Spurlock could travel back in time he would get tattooed by Ed Hardy in his heyday. "It would have been great to get a body suit from him and soak up his knowledge on tattooing and its history," Spurlock said.

The artist also derives inspiration from some other unusual sources. Andrew Johnson-Lally's grim portrayal of the Norwegian countryside and his epic illustrations of troll folklore have been influential in Spurlock's artistry. Lately, he has also admired the movies of Nicolas Winding Refn. Although he feels that these sources fuel his creative energy, Spurlock doesn't believe that his own art has a theme. Likewise, he doesn't really have a favorite style of tattooing. If a tattoo looks like it will age well and is done technically correct and clean, it is his favorite style. "I think I am relatively removed from the 'art work' idea," he said. "I consult with people and help them build images based on their ideas that will hopefully age well. It is not about me and my vision. I'm just steering; they are shouting the destination."

Spurlock's enthusiasm for tattooing has been contagious. His family is proud of his success as an artist and his father has even collected some serious work from his son. This acceptance took some time and some shift in thought. Though Spurlock's grandfather had been tattooed in WWI, later in life those tattoos were a source of shame. A born-again Christian, he viewed tattoos as the devil's art. Spurlock's parents were initially concerned with his decision to be a tattooist. They had hoped that he would continue on into graduate school once he had earned his B.F.A. Fortunately, now they see that their son has found his calling and they are proud of what he has built for himself. Spurlock, too, is happy with where his journey has taken him, though he refuses to take pride in anything that he has done. To Spurlock, pride is the first step toward laziness. Contact Zack Spurlock through his e-mail, zackspurlock@yahoo.com or by visiting anonymoustattoo.com. 











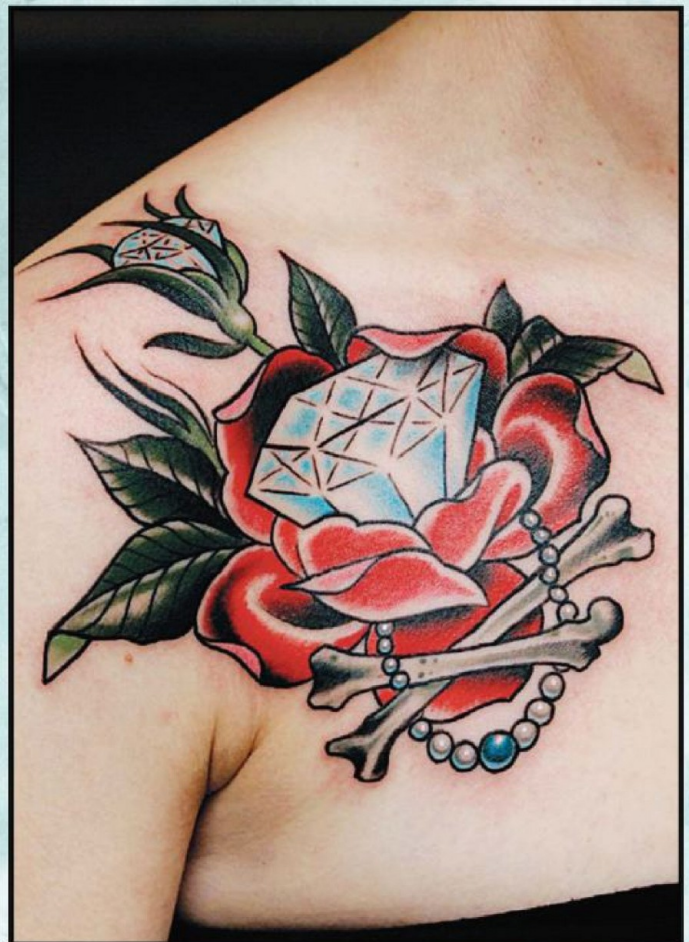


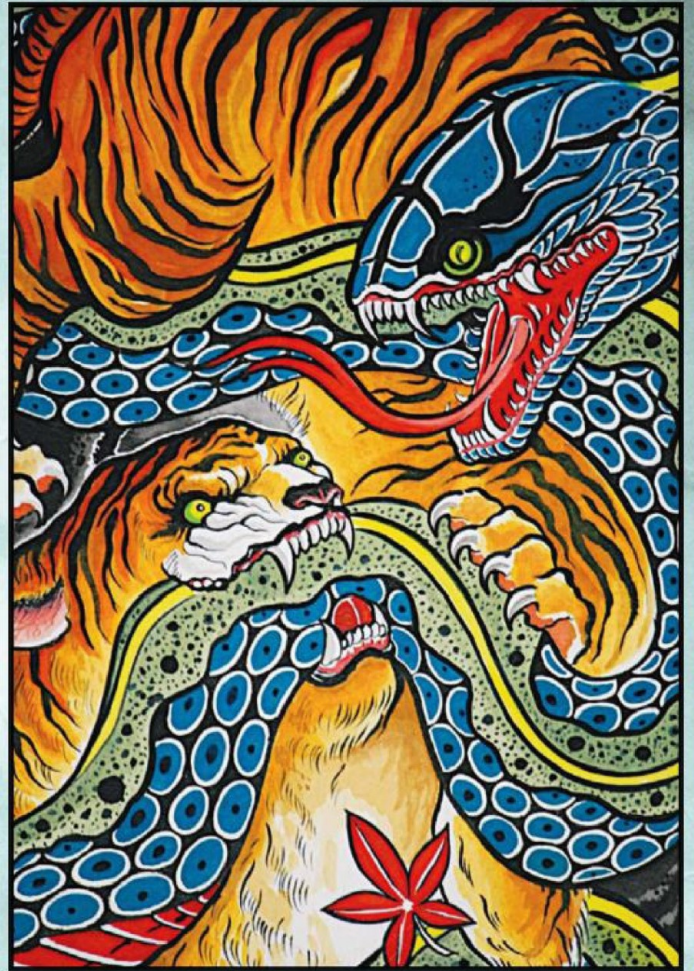


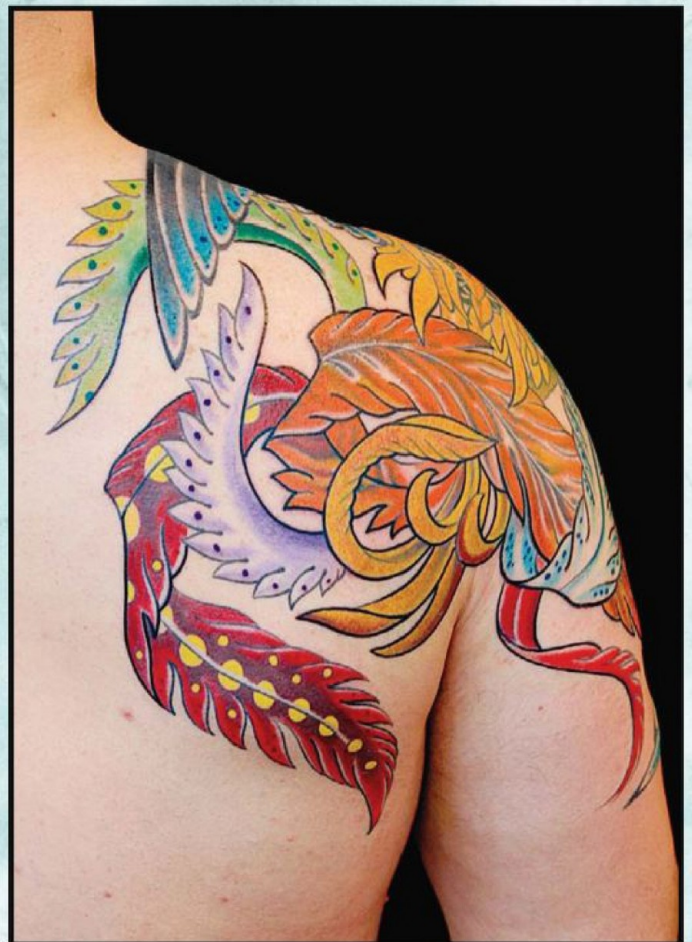












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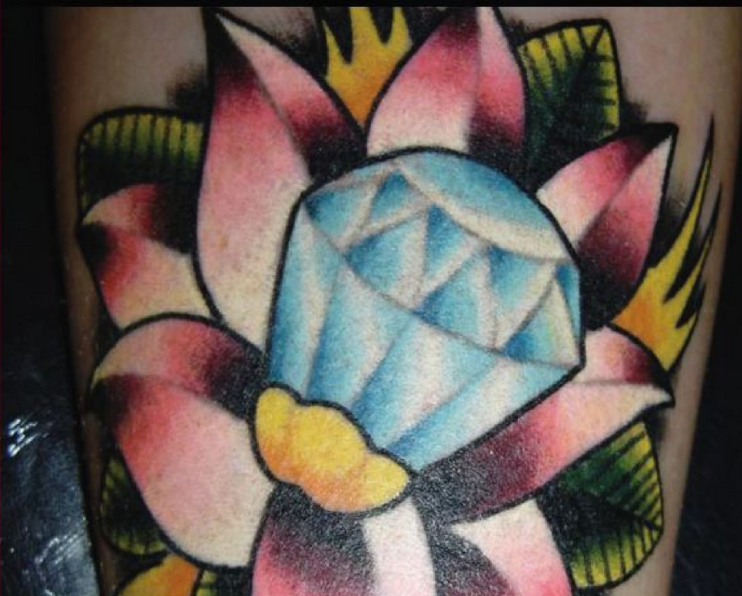
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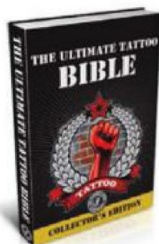
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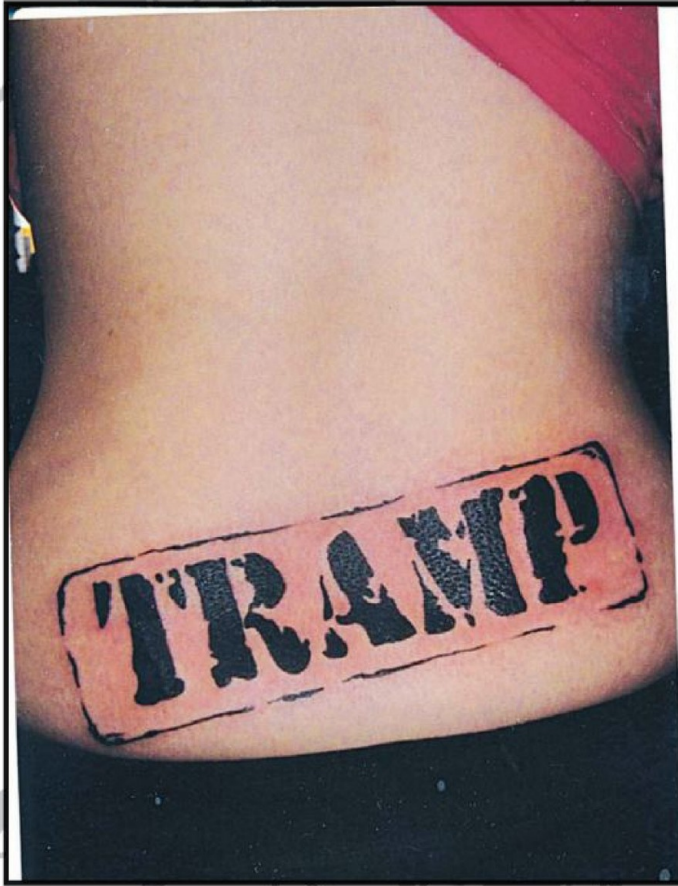
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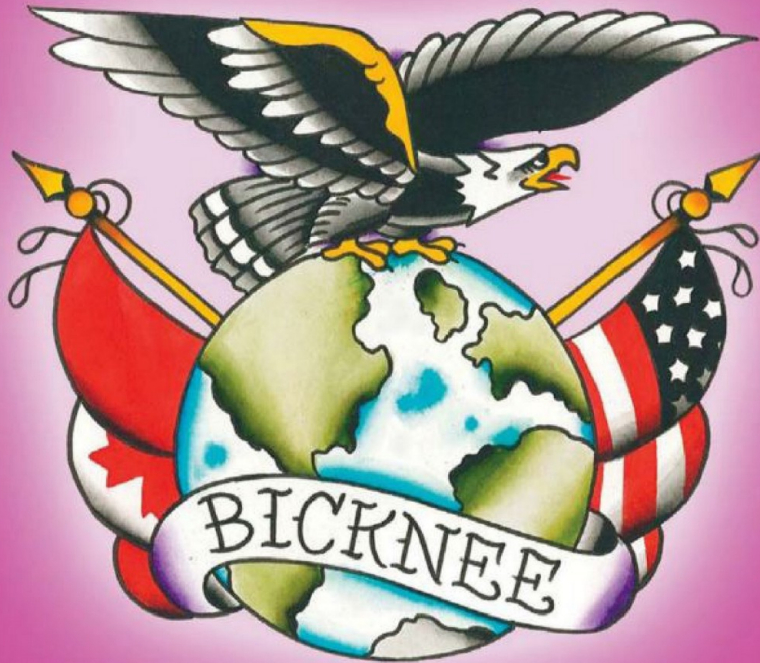


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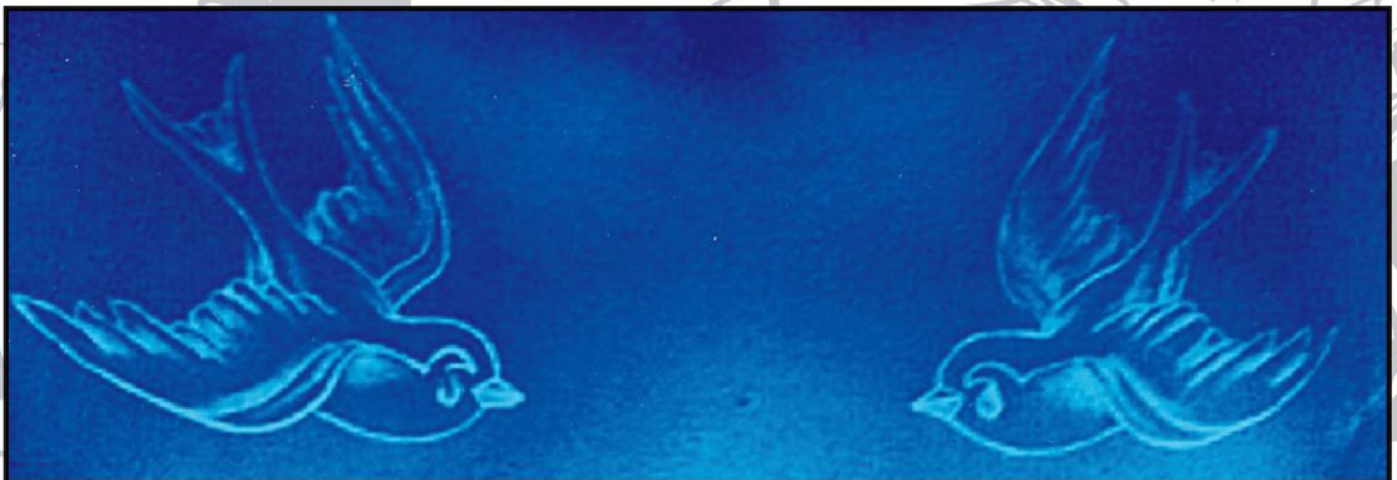
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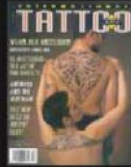
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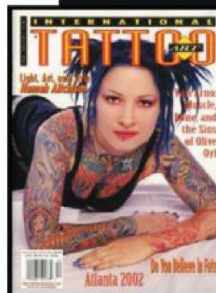
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